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A COMEDY OF TERRORS.

BY

JAMES DEMILLE,
AUTHOR OF "THE DODGE CLUB," ETC., ETC.

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CONTENTS.

		PAGE
I.	THE MAN WITH THE CHIGNON	1
II.	THE MISDIRECTED LETTERS	7
III.	REJECTED ADDRESSES	12
IV.	DEALINGS WITH "MOOSOO"	20
V.	DESPISED LOVE	27
VI.	A DUEL IN THE DARK	31
VII.	A BAFFLED FLIGHT	36
VIII.	AT HIS MERCY	39
IX.	AN APPARITION	45
X.	THE HAUNTED MIND	48
XI.	AT SEA	53
XII.	IN PARIS	57
XIII.	AN UNEXPECTED CALL	63
XIV.	AN AGGRESSIVE CALL	67
XV.	MEETING AND PARTING	72
XVI.	AN IRRESISTIBLE APPEAL	76
XVII.	A DESPERATE PROJECT	81
XVIII.	A TERRIBLE PROPOSAL	85
XIX.	THREATS CUT SHORT	90
XX.	DRIVEN TO EXTREMITIES	94
XXI.	LAYING THE GHOST	99
XXII.	IN THE TOILS	103
XXIII.	FLIGHT	107
XXIV.	A RESCUE	112
XXV.	AN OVERWHELMING DISCOVERY	116
XXVI.	ANXIOUS INQUIRIES	121
XXVII.	IN SPACE	124
XXVIII.	THE SECRET PLACE OF THUNDER	129
XXIX.	OVER THE CLOUDS AND OVER THE SEA	135
XXX.	LAND HO!	139
XXXI.	OUT OF PRISON	144
XXXII.	IN A BROUGHAM	149

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A COMEDY OF TERRORS.

I.

THE MAN WITH THE CHIGNON.

THE elegant residence of Mrs. Lovell, at Montreal, stood just where Blank Street terminates in Dash Street, and its windows commanded an extensive view of the former thoroughfare. A caller was just leaving the house; while inside was Mrs. Lovell herself, in such a position that she could see out of the window without being visible, and her eyes were fixed upon the caller who was just retiring. This person did not claim her attention long, for he rapidly descended the steps, and, after walking down the street with long, swift strides the length of one block, he turned round the first corner and disappeared.

Upon this Mrs. Lovell withdrew her eyes from the window and stood for a time in deep thought. Standing in this attitude, she showed herself an uncommonly pretty woman. A minute description of her, however, is hardly necessary just now; suffice it to say, that Mrs. Lovell was a widow; a profound and pronounced brunette; young, wealthy, elegant, joyous, and also very well able to take care of herself in every respect.

After standing thus for some time she left the room, and, ascending the stairs, she entered an apartment at the top, by the landing.

"O Maudie dear!" she exclaimed in an excited voice as she entered, "who do you think has been here? what do you think has happened? O dear, it's such a worry!"

Her abrupt manner and excited words aroused a young girl who was in the room. She was seated in an armchair, one hand supporting her head, and the other one listlessly holding a letter.

"Well, Georgie dear," said she, turning her face, "what is it?"

The face which she thus turned was one of extreme beauty and great refinement of feature, and was pervaded by an expression of pensive and quiet sadness. She seemed also as if she might have been dropping a tear or two all by herself. There was a certain family likeness between the two, for they were sisters; but apart from this they were unlike, and when together this dissimilarity was very conspicuous. Both were brunettes, but the fashion of their features and the expression of their faces were different. In Mrs. Lovell's face there was a very decided piquancy, and various signs of a light and joyous temperament; while Maud showed nothing of the kind. At the present moment the sadness of her face might have concealed its real expression; but any one could see in it the unmistakable signs of a far greater depth of feeling than was known to her sister.

"Maudie dear!" said Mrs. Lovell at length, after some silence.

"Well, Georgie," said Maud, languidly.

Mrs. Lovell sighed.

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What in the world I am to do I really cannot say. I 'll tell you what I 'll do," she added, after a pause, "I 'll go to Paris."

"Go to Paris!" exclaimed the other, — "go to Paris! What do you mean? What has happened? What put such a mad fancy as that into your head?"

"I 'll go to Paris," said Mrs. Lovell, with a determined tap of her little foot on the floor. "You see, Maudie, I 've been thinking of going there so long, and it 's so very convenient for me, and you shall go with me, too, you know; and this is just the time, for if we put it off any longer, we 'll be too late, won't we, Maudie? and so I think we 'd better go by the next steamer. What do you say?"

At this Maud sat upright, and looked at her sister with an expression of intense astonishment.

"What in the world *do* you mean?" she asked. "Go to Paris! and by the next steamer. Why, Georgie, are you mad?"

"Mad! far from it. I 'm really in earnest, you know. I 'm going by the next steamer. O, my mind is quite made up, — quite. You can easily get ready. We need n't get any new dresses here. It will be so utterly charming to get them in Paris."

"I wonder what in the world you *do* mean," said Maud, in bewilderment. "You can't be in earnest."

"O, but I really am, you know. I 'm in trouble, dear, and the only way to get out of it is to go to Paris."

"Trouble!" said Maud, in new surprise; "*you* in trouble! What is it, Georgie dear?"

Mrs. Lovell sighed.

"O well, I 'm beginning to be worried out of my life with no end of bothers and torments, and I want to fly from them all."

"Bothers and torments?"

"Yes, bothers and torments."

"What?"

"Why, you know, people fancy I like them, and come and try to get me to marry them, when I don't really what I am to do about it."

"People? what people? Do you mean any people in particular? Of course, you must expect to be very much admired; and I 'm sure you ought n't to regret it, if you are; but why that should trouble you I confess I 'm at a loss to see."

"O, it is n't that; it is n't general admiration, of course. It 's an unpleasant sort of particular admiration that I refer to, that makes people come and bother me with telling me how fond they are of me; and I feel so sorry for them, too; and I have to give them pain when I don't want to."

"Why, Georgie dear, you talk as though some one had been making a proposal."

"Of course I do. That 's just what I mean; and I 'm sure I never gave him any encouragement. Now did I, Maudie darling?"

"Him? Who?"

"Why, Mr. Seth Grimes."

"Mr. Grimes!" exclaimed Maud, with an indescribable accent, staring in a bewildered way at her sister.

"Well! what 's the matter?" asked Mrs. Lovell. "What makes you stare so?"

"Why, Mr. Grimes! The idea of Mr. Grimes! Why, Georgie, how could he possibly have ever thought of such a thing? Mr. Grimes!"

And Maud sat looking unutterable things, quite overwhelmed by the one stupendous thought of Mr. Grimes.

"I 'm sure I don't see any reason why you should stare so," said Mrs. Lovell. "If people will come on such errands, I don't see why Mr. Grimes should not come as well as anybody."

"Mr. Grimes!" said Maud; "why, it 's perfect audacity."

"No, it is n't," said Mrs. Lovell. "It is n't anything of the sort. But I know you never liked him, and your bitter prejudice blinds you to his many admirable qualities."

"Liked him! Why, did you?"

"Well, I have a great fancy for original people, and — and he is one."

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"He 's a man of the people, of course."

"That 's a euphemism. For my part, I should use a much harsher word to express my idea of Mr. Grimes, Georgie."

"Well, don't, Maudie dear, or I shall be vexed. At any rate, you see, I liked him because he was so — so original, you know, and you see he has misinterpreted it; and he has thought that because I liked to talk with him I would be equally well pleased to live with him. But that does n't follow, I 'm sure; for I know many very, very nice people that I like to talk with, but I 'm sure I should n't at all like to marry them. And that 's the trouble about Mr. Grimes."

"I 'm sure," said Maud, contemptuously, "I do not see why you should tolerate such a person for one moment; and I 've often wondered how you ever became acquainted with him."

Mrs. Lovell sighed.

"Well, Maudie dear," said she, "it was very odd, it was really quite an adventure; and I suppose I may as well tell you all about it."

"Yes, do, dear," said Maud. "You 've kept awfully close about this, you know, Georgie."

"Well, you know, Maudie dear," said Mrs. Lovell, after a brief pause, which was taken up with collecting her thoughts, "I became acquainted with him last year. I was at Niagara. One day I was out, and it was a dreadfully windy day, quite a gale. I had put on my very largest chignon, — awfully thoughtless in me, of course, but then you know that 's the way I always am, — and I pinned it down as securely as possible before venturing forth. The wind proved even worse than I had anticipated; but other ladies were out, and I needed an airing very much, and so I walked on till I found a place which commanded a fine view of the Falls. It was a terribly windy place, but I found a railing where I could see them, and there were several people there, and among them was Mr. Grimes. I was n't acquainted with him at all, but had merely heard his name mentioned. Well, you know, Maudie dear, I was just beginning to conclude that it was altogether too windy for me, when all of a sudden there came a terrific gust of wind, and in an instant it tore away all my head-dress, — hat, chignon, and all, — and whisked it all away over the cliff. I gave a scream, half of fright and half of mortification. I was in utter confusion. It was so shocking. Such an exposure, you know. And what was I to do? Well, just as I was in a perfect agony of shame, and did n't dare to look around for fear of meeting the eyes of people, Mr. Grimes suddenly came up. 'Don't distress yourself, ma'am,' said he. ''T ain't lost. I 'll get it in five minutes.'"

"He did n't!" exclaimed Maud, indignantly. "What effrontery! O, my poor, dear Georgie, how you must have suffered!"

"Suffered! Why, Maudie dear, it was agony, — yes, agony; and at such a time! Tears of shame burst from my eyes, and I could n't say one word. Well, that was very bad, but it was nothing to what followed. After all, you know, it was the idea of the thing that was the worst. In reality it was not so very bad. You know what an immense head of hair I have, all my own; I could do without chignons, for that matter; so, you know, if nothing had been done, it might n't have been noticed, and I might have retired without making much of an exposure. My hair was all tossing about my head; but ladies often lose their hats, and my appearance would n't have been *very* bad, now would it, Maudie dear?"

"You would have looked perfectly lovely," said Maud. "But go on. This is really beginning to get exciting."

"Well," continued Mrs. Lovell, "there I stood, really crying with shame, when to my horror, my utter

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"What? what?" asked Maud, eagerly.

"Why, Maudie, he began to go over the cliff."

"Over the cliff!"

"Yes, over the cliff. Was n't it awful? Not merely the fact of a man going over the cliff, but going over it on such an errand! And imagine me standing there in public, the centre of such a scene as that! And I hate scenes so!"

"Poor darling Georgie!" sighed Maud.

"Well, you know, Maudie dear," continued Mrs. Lovell, "I was utterly stupefied with astonishment and mortification. Before I could utter one single word he was out of sight. I dared not look round for fear of catching the glances of people. I felt all their eyes on me, and longed for the earth to open and swallow me up. I had a wild impulse to run; but then, you know, I felt terribly anxious about Mr. Grimes. It was an awful thing, to think of a man going down there, and on such an errand. If he had gone down to save a life, it would have been sublime; but going down to save a chignon was too exquisitely absurd. Still, I felt that his life was really in danger, and so I stood there in terrible suspense.

"I really do not know how long I stood there, but at last I saw some wretched people coming forward, looking so odiously amused that I could have almost pushed them over. They looked down, and laughed, and one of them said: 'Hurra! he's got it!' Those few words were enough. They showed me that there had been no horrible accident. In a moment my deep suspense left me, and the only feeling that I had was a longing to get away. For, O Maudie, imagine me standing there, and Mr. Grimes approaching me solemnly with my chignon, after having saved it at the risk of his life, and making a formal presentation of it in the presence of those horrid men! The run all the way back to the hotel.

"Well, on reaching the hotel I went at once to my room, and shut myself up. I had all sorts of fears, and all those fears were fully realized; for after about an hour a gentleman called and sent up his name; and who do you think it was? Why, Mr. Grimes, of course! Now, under ordinary circumstances, his astonishing devotion would have touched me; but that dreadful chignon made it all fearfully ridiculous, and all of the ridicule attached itself to me. What was more, I knew perfectly well that he had brought the horrid thing with him, on purpose to restore it into my own hands. That was an ordeal which, I confess, I had n't the courage to face; so I excused myself and was very ill. I expected, of course, that he would leave it."

"And did n't he?" asked Maud, in wonder.

"Leave it? No indeed, not he. You don't know Mr. Grimes yet, Maudie dear."

"The horrid wretch!"

"He is a noble-hearted man, and you must not abuse him, or I shall really feel quite angry with you."

"But I was only sympathizing with you, Georgie dear! I did n't mean any offence."

"No, of course not, dear. I know you would n't hurt my feelings. Well, you know, he did n't leave it, but carried it off, and that one fact filled me with a new horror. In the first place, I was afraid my chignon would become the public talk; and then, again, I felt sure that he would call again, bringing that horrid thing with him. I was convinced that he had made up his mind to deliver it into my hands alone. The thought drove me to despair. And so, in my desperation, I determined to quit the place at once, and thus get rid of all my troubles. So I made up some excuse to my friends, and left by the early train on the following day for home. And now I'm coming to the end of my story, and you will be able

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to go to Paris.

"About three months ago a person called on me here at my own house. I went down, and who do you think it was? Why, Mr. Grimes; and he had a parcel in his hand."

"O dear!" exclaimed Maud. "Not the chignon! O, not the chignon!"

"Yes, Maudie dear," said Mrs. Lovell, sadly and solemnly, "the chignon. When I entered the room, he was so eager and so excited that I really felt afraid. It was only with the greatest difficulty that I could keep him in bounds at all. Besides, the remembrance of the affair was utterly ridiculous, and this absurdity, together with the fact that he had done a wonderfully daring thing for my sake, combined to make me feel embarrassed. He, on his part, had no end of things to tell me. What he said showed an astonishing amount of devotion. Positively, he had been all over Canada searching for me. He had spent months in this search, before finding me. And now he appeared before me, with joy on his face, exultation in his eyes, and that horrid chignon in his hands. 'Here it is,' he said, 'safe and sound, ma'am, — not a star erased, not a stripe effaced, — to be given to your own hands in good order and condition'; and was n't that a funny speech to make, Maudie darling?"

"Very," said Maud, dryly.

"Well, you know after that he went on in the strangest way. He said he had risked his life to get it; and had kept it for months till he loved it like his own soul; that it had been near him day and night; and that to part with it would break his heart; and he wanted to know if I would be satisfied with another instead of this one. He had got one made in New York, he said, which was the exact counterpart of this; and entreated me to let him keep my chignon, and give me the other. Well, you know, it was a queer thing to ask, but I really felt awfully sorry for him, and he pleaded so hard; and he had done so much; and he had such a point of it you know, that —"

"What?" exclaimed Maud, "you did n't, you could n't —"

"Yes, but I could, and I did!"

At this Maud looked unutterable things.

"There was really no help for it," continued Mrs. Lovell, placidly. "Why, only think, Maudie. He could easily have kept it, if he had chosen, without asking me at all."

"Yes, but don't you see, Georgie, that there is all the difference in the world between taking a thing and having it given to you?"

"O, but in this case, where he had done so much, you know, he really deserved it, and as he made such a point of it, I yielded — and so — he has it now."

"Well," said Maud, "of all the ridiculous stories that I have ever listened to, this is the most absurd. I 've heard of lovers wanting a lock of their ladies' hair, but never before did I hear of one who wanted a whole head of it."

"Yes, but then, you know, this was n't my own hair."

"But that only makes it the more absurd," said Maud. "He is cherishing the hair of some other person, — some French peasant, or perhaps the accumulated locks of some dozens of them. And he goes into raptures over this! He sits and gazes upon it in fondest admiration! He devours it with his eyes! He passes his fingers through its dark rippling curls! He —"

"He does n't do anything of the kind," interrupted Mrs. Lovell, somewhat sharply. "Mr. Grimes is quite above such nonsense. Of course he knows what it really is."

"But, Georgie, you did n't take his present, did you. Of course not."

"O yes, but I did —"

"You did!"

"Why, certainly."

At this Maud drew a long breath.

"And what 's more," continued Mrs. Lovell, "I 've worn it ever since."

"You have n't!" cried Maud.

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ell, quietly. "I 'm sure it 's very becoming, and I only wonder how he could get one so good."

"Georgie, I declare you make me feel positively ashamed of you," cried Maud, indignantly. "It 's really quite shocking. And *you* of all people! Why, you are usually so very fastidious, you know, and you stand so on *les convenances*, that I cannot understand how you ever came to forget yourself so far."

"Nonsense, Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell. "I can judge very well for myself, and besides, you know that things that would n't do for you are all very well for me. But let that pass. It happened as I say, and the consequence was that Mr. Grimes saw more in that little piece of good-nature than was actually meant. So, you know, he devoted himself to me, and for the last two or three months I 've seen very much of him. I liked him, too. He has many noble qualities; and he was awfully fond of me, and I felt half sorry for him, and all that. I liked to have him for a friend, but the trouble was that was not enough. He was always too ardent and devoted. I could see his face flush, and hear his voice tremble, whenever we met. Yet what could I do? I kept as cool as possible, and tried to chill him, but he only grew worse.

"And the plain fact is," continued Mrs. Lovell, "he never would have done, never. He has noble sentiments, it is true; but then he has such funny manners. He has a large heart, but dreadfully big hands. He has a truly Titanic soul, but his feet are of the same proportions. And all that is very dreadful, you know, Maudie. And what makes it worse, I really like him, and I feel a sense of deplorable weakness when I am with him. It may be because he is so big and strong and brave, and has such a voice, but I think it may also be because I am just a little bit fond of him."

"Fond of him? O Georgie! You don't mean it."

ever so little," said Mrs. Lovell, apologetically. "But at any rate it 's really quite shocking to think how I lose control of myself and —"

"And what, Georgie dear?" asked Maud, anxiously, as Mrs. Lovell paused.

"Why, and let him treat me so —"

"Treat you so? How, dear?"

"Well, I 'll tell you. It was to-day, you know. Of course you understand how he has been devoting himself to me for the past few months, and I have been trying to fight him off. Well, today he came, and he took me by storm, and I could n't fight him off at all; for before I could think, he was in the middle of a most vehement confession, and ended with a proposal. Well, you know, I never was so embarrassed in all my life, and I really did n't know what to do."

"You refused him, of course."

"O, but it was n't so easy. You see I really liked him, and he knew it."

"Knew it? How *could* he know it?"

"O, you know, I told him so."

"Told him!"

"Yes, and that was what ruined all, for he grew dreadfully bold, and began to appropriate me in a way that was really alarming. O dear, I should n't like to have to go through it again. You see, his proposal was not to be thought of, but then it was not easy to decline it in a pleasant and agreeable way. What was worse, I grew embarrassed and lost all my usual presence of mind, and at last had to tell him simply that it could not be.

"And then, O Maudie dear, he was so cut up. He asked me if this answer was final, and I told him it was. Then he sat silent for no end of time, and I felt so dreadfully weak, that I am sure if he had urged me I really don't see how I could have refused him. But he did n't. He was so simple-hearted that he never thought of trying to change my decision. At last he broke the silence by asking me in a dreadfully hollow voice if I loved another; I told him I did n't, and he gave

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me in a still more doleful voice if I would allow him to keep that wretched thing, the chignon, you know. He said he would like some small token — "

"Small token!" cried Maud, "a whole chignon! O dear! Georgie, do you think he intends having it put in a locket?"

"I don't know what he intends. I only know that I feel very, very sad and sorry for him, and did n't dream of refusing. I would n't look him in the face, but sat there looking as silly as possible. So at last he rose to go; I rose too, and felt so very nervous that I could n't even raise my eyes."

"O Georgie, Georgie, how very, very silly you were, poor darling!"

"I know I was, Maudie, and I knew it at the time, but how could I help it?"

"Well, dear?"

"Well, then, you know — "

Mrs. Lovell hesitated.

"What?"

"Why, we stood in that way for some time, and I wondered what he was doing, but did n't dare to look up, and then at last he took my hand and said, 'Good by,' in a shockingly hoarse voice. His hand was like ice, and my hand trembled excessively from excitement, and then, too, I felt dreadfully sorry for him, so I said, 'Good by,' and then, Maudie, he, the poor fellow, stooped down — and put his arms round me — and kissed me."

"He what!" cried Maud.

"O, you need n't be so awfully indignant, Maudie, I say it calmly, he kissed me, on my forehead; but I don't feel quite so calm now, when I think of that hot tear of his that fell on my cheek."

Mrs. Lovell sighed.

Maud looked earnestly at her, and both sat in silence for some time.

II.

THE MISDIRECTED LETTERS.

"You see, Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell, after a prolonged silence, "I am really I 'll tell you exactly why. It 's all Mr. Grimes. I have refused him, and he went away heart-broken, and all that; but I have a dreadful presentiment that he will be back again, bringing that horrible chignon with him, and making fresh protestations. I like him very well, as I have explained, but I don't want to marry him, of course, or any other person. The trouble is, however, that I have no confidence in myself, I am so shockingly weak; and I 'm terribly afraid that he will come again and persuade me to do something very, very silly. Why, Maudie dear, when I think of what I have just escaped, I really tremble. I 'm sure if he had only been a little more urgent, I really don't know what would have become of me. And then, think of the name, — Grimes! Mrs. Grimes! Why, it really sends a cold shudder through me. Really, Maudie darling, I 'm afraid to stay here any longer than I can help. He will be here again, and I shall have to see him. Of course I will manage so as not to see him alone again, but I cannot always have you with me, and he will be sure to find me some day. And then think of my fate! O yes, I must go, and I shall go immediately. I have made up my mind to leave by the very next steamer. Really I shall never feel safe till I have the ocean between me and Mr. Grimes."

"I think, on the whole, Georgie dear, that it would be a very good plan. You expect me to go with you?"

"Of course, darling; did n't I say so at the very first?"

"Yes," said Maud, slowly, and in the tone of one speaking to herself. "Yes, it is better so, better for both of us, the best thing now — "

She sighed heavily.

At this Mrs. Lovell looked earnestly at her sister and seemed struck by something in her appearance.

"Why, Maudie! what 's the matter with you?" she exclaimed.

"With me? O, nothing," said Maud.

"But you 're shockingly pale, and you 've been crying; and I 've been so

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I look at you I see plainly that something is the matter. What has happened? It must be something dreadful. You really look heart-broken about something. Why, my poor, dear, sweet darling Maudie!"

Full of tender pity and affection, Mrs. Lovell went over to her sister, and, kneeling on the floor by her side, she twined her arms around her, and kissed her. Maud sat for a moment as though trying to control her feelings, but suddenly gave way, and, letting her head fall on her sister's shoulder, she flung her arms around her and burst into tears.

"You have some trouble, darling," said Mrs. Lovell. "Tell it to me, tell it to your own Georgie." And then she proceeded to kiss Maud, and soothe her and coax her to give her her confidence, until at length Maud promised that she would. But it was some time before she could recover from the agitation into which she had fallen. She raised herself, and tried to control her feelings; but having yielded to them once, it was not very easy to regain her composure, and it was some time before she could speak.

"O Georgie," she said, at last, "I'm in such dreadful trouble, and I'm sure I don't know how it happened or how it will end, or what I ever shall do."

"Only fancy!" said Mrs. Lovell, "and I've been so selfish that I never noticed this; but then, I'm sure I should never have thought of *you* being in trouble, darling. How can trouble ever come near *you?*"

"I'm sure I don't understand it," said Maud, mournfully.

"But what is it all about? Tell me what it is, as far as you know. For my part, I can't imagine even a cause for trouble to *you*."

"I'm in dreadful, dreadful trouble," sighed Maud. "Mr. Carrol, you know."

"Mr. Carrol!"

"Yes. He—he—" Maud hesitated.

"What? he did n't propose, did he? ing a vague suspicion that he was fond of you; but then, I was so bothered, you know, that I did n't think very much about it. So he proposed, did he? Well, I always liked him, and I think you did too."

"Yes," sighed Maud; "I did, I really liked him."

"But when did he propose? It's very strange. How very sly you've been, Maudie dear."

"Why, he wrote a letter."

"Wrote? What! wrote? O dear! I thought it was only old men, weary of the world, that wrote when they proposed. To think of Mr. Carrol writing! Only fancy! I'm sure I never would have thought that of him."

"Well," said Maud, mournfully, "he apologized for writing, and said the reason was that he could never see me alone, and was anxious to know his fate. You see you and I were always together, Georgie dear, and so he chose to write to me about it."

"Well, that is certainly a justification, Maudie, for we always are together, as you say; and now that I think of it, I don't see how any one could have ever had a chance to see you alone. But I was always thoughtless. Well, Mr. Carrol proposed, as you say; and what did you say? Did you accept him? I suppose you did, I even hope you did; for now, when I come to think of it, he seems to me to be admirably suited to you. He is young, handsome, and evidently very fond of you; he's rich, too, but of course I don't care for that, for reasons which I have already explained, you know. So I really hope you did accept him."

Maud drew a long breath.

"Yes, Georgie dear, but that was n't all. I received another proposal at the same time."

"Another proposal!"

"Yes, and who do you think it was from? Why, from that odious Frenchman who calls himself the Count du Potiron, and a very suitable name it is for such a man."

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"The Count du Potiron!" repeated Mrs. Lovell. "How perfectly preposterous!"

"Perfectly," echoed Maud. "Why," really I had scarcely ever spoken to him, you know. I noticed, of course, that there was a great tendency on his part to those *galanteries* which every Frenchman considers himself bound to offer; but I really never suspected that he meant anything by them. Even when I received his proposal, it only amused me, and I scarcely gave it a thought until to-day."

"To-day?" said Mrs. Lovell; "well, what happened to-day?"

"Why," said Maud, "to-day I find that some dreadful mistake has been made; but how, or why, or by whom I cannot quite make out."

"Tell me all about it, dear," said Mrs. Lovell, earnestly; "perhaps I can help you to find out."

"Well, Georgie, you know, of course, I like Mr. Carrol, and so, — why, when he asked me, — I — I wrote him that — well, I accepted him, you know, and at the same time I wrote that absurd Frenchman a civil note, declining his proposal, of course. Well, Georgie dear, I waited, and waited, and for two or three days I expected to see Mr. Carrol. You know how often he used to come. Well, he did n't come at all, but yesterday that odious Frenchman called."

"I remember," said Mrs. Lovell.

"Well, I would n't see him."

"Yes."

Maud was silent for a time, and at length continued: "This morning I received a most singular note from him. He addressed me by my Christian name, and told me that my acceptance of his proposal had overwhelmed him with the profoundest joy. My acceptance of his proposal! Think of that, Georgie! And I had rejected him positively, and almost contemptuously."

"Good heavens! Maudie, dearest, what is the meaning of it all?"

"Wait a moment," said Maud, drawing a long breath, and speaking in an excited manner. "Wait till you hear all. Such a letter, of course, surprised me, and at the same time excited all sorts of fears. I could n't understand it at all. I suspected that I must have made some horrible mistake of the most stupid kind. My anxiety was increased by the silence of Mr. Carrol. I had accepted him, but he had neither called on me nor written. I was bitterly mortified, and afterwards dreadfully anxious; and though I began to fear that some mistake had been made, I really did not believe it till I got that dreadful letter from the Frenchman."

"Maudie darling, you really terrify me," said Mrs. Lovell. "I have a suspicion that is positively quite shocking."

"This afternoon, said Maud, in a tremulous voice, — "this afternoon, just after lunch, I got this letter. It 's from Mr. Carrol. Read it, and tell me what you think about it."

With these words she handed to Mrs. Lovell the letter which all this time she had been holding in her hand. Mrs. Lovell took it in silence, and, opening it, she read the following: —

"Dear Miss Heathcote: If you wished to crush me, your wish is gratified. I am crushed utterly, and am now in the lowest state of prostration in which even *you* would wish to see me.

"I received your reply to my letter two days ago, and would have acknowledged it before, but I did not do so, partly because I supposed that any further remarks from me would be unwelcome, but more particularly because I did not feel altogether able to write.

"I expect to leave this place to-day, and forever. All my arrangements are made, and you and I will never meet again. Under the circumstances, therefore, I hope you will forgive me for saying that your rejection of my offer might have been made in terms a little less cruel and cutting. *After all that has passed between us*, I think I deserved something more than a note such as the one you thought fit to send me. It seems to me that any one with ordinary

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mortification than to inflict it. After all, my offence was not so very great as to be unpardonable. It only consisted in the avowal of my love for you.

"I might say very much more, but I think it is better to leave it unsaid. At any rate you and I now part forever; but whether your peculiar mode of dealing with me will make you very much happier or not, the future alone can determine.

"Yours truly,
"PAUL CARROL."

Mrs. Lovell read this letter over twice. Then she sat and thought. Then she read it again. After this, she looked fixedly at Maud, whose pale face confronted hers with an expression of utter woe that was pitiable to witness.

"This is horrible, simply horrible," said Mrs. Lovell. "My poor darling, how could it have happened? It's all some frightful mistake."

"And, O Georgie dear! I wrote him the very kindest, kindest letter," said Maud. "I told him how I —" But here a great sob burst from her, and choked her utterance, and she buried her face in her hands and wept aloud. Mrs. Lovell drew her towards her, and tried to soothe her with loving caresses and gentle words; but Maud's grief was too great for consolation, and it was very long before she was able to overcome it.

"He's gone, gone forever, and I'll never see him again!" she murmured over and over again amid her tears. "And I was expecting him, and wanting to see him so!"

"Poor dear darling!" sighed Mrs. Lovell; after which she sat for some time with an expression of deep perplexity on her pretty face, endeavoring to fathom the mystery of this somewhat singular affair.

"Of course, Maudie dearest," said she, at last, "there has been some mistake, and you yourself must have made the mistake. There is only one thing only thing that can account for it, and it is just possible. Don't you think so, darling?"

"Don't I think what? You don't say what it is?"

"Well, I was thinking that it was just possible that you, in your excitement, which was very natural under the circumstances, you know, — that you might have made a dreadful blunder in the address, and directed the Count's letter to Mr. Carrol, and Mr. Carrol's letter to the Count."

"And that's the very thing I have been suspecting," exclaimed Maud, in a tone of dismay; "but it's so shocking that I don't dare to think of it."

"Well, darling, won't you acknowledge that it is possible?"

"Certainly, it is possible, but not probable."

"Well, now let us see about the probability of it," said Mrs. Lovell, putting herself in an attitude of profound reflection. "In the first place you answered the Count's letter."

"Yes."

"And then Mr. Carrol's."

"Yes."

"Now do you remember whether you addressed each one immediately after writing it, or waited till you had finished your writing and then addressed both?"

"O, I remember that perfectly well. I did not address the letters until after I had finished both. I never do when I have more than one to write."

"Well, of course, you were a little agitated, particularly after your last effusion to Mr. Carrol. It was very natural. And you were excited, you know, Maudie dear. You know you were."

"I suppose I may have been a little excited."

"Well, is n't it possible, or even probable, that in your excitement you may have put the letters in their envelopes and addressed each of them to the wrong person altogether?"

Maud gave a heavy sigh, and looked despairingly at her sister.

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ued Mrs. Lovell, "there's another thing I should like to ask. I should like to know the general nature of each letter, so as to see if there was anything in either of them which might show the recipient that it was a mistake. A great deal depends on that, you know. Tell me now — I don't want to get your secrets, you know, I only want to help you. Let us begin with the one you wrote first, what did you say to the Count?"

"Well, Georgie, it was a very cool and civil rejection, that was all. At first I thought of writing in the third person, but I concluded that it was better to do so in the first; so I told him that I regretted that he had written to me in that way, and hinted that there had been nothing in our mutual relations to warrant his sending such a proposal to me; and I very civilly hoped that he would not feel disappointed."

"And there was nothing more?"

"No."

"Nothing which might show that it was not for Mr. Carrol; no allusions to his being a foreigner, for example?"

"Certainly not. It was so very general in its terms that it would have done to insert in a Complete Letter-Writer. But then, Georgie darling, that is the very thing that should have excited Mr. Carrol's suspicions, and made him sure that such a letter could not have been intended for him."

"Well, Maudie, men are such odd, unreasonable creatures, you know, that there's no knowing how they will act, particularly in love affairs. I'm afraid he must have accepted the letter as your own actual answer to his, or else how could he have written in such a very shocking way? But now tell me about the other."

"Well, I wrote to Mr. Carrol the very kindest, kindest letter that I could compose. I'm sure I said everything that he could expect, and I even expressed a wish to see him soon."

allusions to any particular incidents?"

"O no; it was only a general expression of — well, you know what, and all that sort of thing."

"How did you begin it? Not with 'Dear Sir'?"

"No. I said, 'My dear Mr. Carrol.'"

"And how did you begin the Count's?"

"Simply with 'Dear Sir.'"

"Not 'Dear Monsieur le Compte,' or 'Dear Count'?"

"Certainly not. The first was French, which would be out of place in an English letter, and the other seemed a little familiar, so I took refuge in the simple formula of 'Dear Sir.'"

"Well, the Count got the letter which began, 'My dear Mr. Carrol.'"

"He must have, if I did make the mistake."

"You are sure that you began it in that way."

"O yes."

"Well, if you did, I don't see what the Count could make out of it. He must have seen that it was not for himself. He's acquainted with Mr. Carrol, too, and must have understood that it was for him. But then again he must have believed that it was for himself. Even French assurance could not make him appropriate a letter which he could see so plainly was addressed to another man."

"There is only one thing that I can think of," said Maud, dolefully, "and I've thought of it frequently; for all this was on my mind before you came in."

"What is that?"

"Well, it is this. I have thought that it is just possible for my writing to be a little illegible; my hand is very angular, you know, and the *o*'s are open, and I don't cross my *t*'s, and all that sort of thing. I find now that in writing the name of Carrol rapidly, it does bear a remote resemblance to the word 'Count.' I dare say you would show the same resemblance if

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this."

And Maud went over to her writing-desk, and wrote the name "Carrol" several times.

"There certainly is a resemblance, as you say," remarked Mrs. Lovell, as she looked at the writing, which was in the most pronounced angular "lady's hand." "There really is quite a resemblance," she repeated, "though the words are so unlike. But then, you know, Maudie dear, you say you wrote 'My dear Mr. Carrol'; would n't it seem a little odd to him to read 'My dear Mr. Count'?"

"O, he would have no trouble about that," said Maud, mournfully. "He might, in the first place, attribute it to my ignorance of the proper style of addressing him, or, what is still more likely, he would probably take the 'Mr.' as a plain 'M,' and would read it, 'My dear M. Count,' which would n't seem to him so very much out of the way, you know. See here."

And Maud, taking up a sheet of note-paper, wrote the words, "My dear Mr. Carrol." Mrs. Lovell looked at it thoughtfully for some time.

"There 's a great deal in what you say, Maudie," said she. "I confess that you may really read those words as 'My dear M. Count,' or even, 'My dear M. le Count.' In fact, I think you could even turn it into 'My cher M. le Count'; and if a pressure were put on one, I would not say that one could not read it as 'Mon cher M. le Count.' In fact, I dare say he reads it that way himself."

Maud sighed heavily, threw down the pen, and retreated to a chair, where she rested her head on her hands, and sat looking gloomily at the floor.

III.

REJECTED ADDRESSES.

At the very time when the two ladies were carrying on the foregoing conversation, one of the subjects of engaged in the important task of packing a trunk. Mr. Seth Grimes was a very large man. He was something over six feet in height; he was broad-shouldered, deep-chested, well-knit, muscular, and sinewy; he had a large face, with small, keen gray eyes, short beard, mustache, and shingled hair. About his face there was an expression of *bonhommie* mingled with resolution, to which on the present occasion there was superadded one of depression. The packing of his trunk, however, appeared at the present time to engross all his thoughts, and at this he worked diligently, until at length he was roused by a knock at the door. He started up to his feet, and at his invitation to come in a young man entered.

"Hallo, Carrol!" said Grimes, "I 'm glad to see you, by jingo! You 're the very fellow I wanted. It's a thunderin' piece of good luck that you dropped in just now, too. If you 'd come half an hour later I 'd been off."

Carrol was a good-looking young fellow enough, with a frank, bold face and well-knit frame. But his frank, bold face was somewhat pale and troubled, and there was an unsettled look in his eyes, and a cloud over his brow. He listened with a dull interest to Grimes's remark, and then said, "Off? What do you mean?"

"Off from this village for good and all."

"Off? What, from Montreal? Why, where are you going?"

"Around the globe," said Grimes, solemnly.

"I don't understand you."

"Wal, I 'm packin' up just now with the intention of startin' from this village, crossin' the plains in a bee-line for Californy, then pursuin' my windin' way per steamer over the briny deep to China, and thence onward and ever onward, as long as life pervades this mortal frame. I 'm off, sir, and for good. Farewell forever, friend of my soul. Think of me at odd times and drop a tear over my untimely end."

"Hang me if I understand a single

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you 're packing your trunk, but I had no idea you were going off so suddenly."

"Wal, sit down, and I 'll explain; sit down. Fill the bowl. Here 's lots of pipes, make yourself comfortable, and gaze your fill at the last of your departin' friend."

At this Carrol took a chair, and sat looking at the other with dull inquiry.

"First of all," said Grimes, "I 'm goin' away."

"Really?"

"Honest. No mistake. Cut stick, vamoose, never again to come back, to go like ancient Cain a wanderer and a vagabond over the face of the earth, with a mark on my forehead, by jingo!"

"Look here, Grimes, don't you think you 're a little incoherent to-day?"

To this Grimes returned no immediate answer. He stood for a few moments in thought, then looking round he selected a chair, which he planted in front of Carrol, and then seating himself there he stooped forward, leaning his elbows on his knees, and fixing his eyes upon the other's face.

"See here, Carrol," said he, at last.

"Well?"

"You 've known me for several years, you 've watched my downrisin's and my upsettin's, and ought to have a pooty good insight into my mental and moral build. Now I 'd like to ask you as a friend one solemn question. It 's this. Have you ever detected, or have you not, a certain vein of sentiment in my moral stratum?"

"Sentiment?" said Carrol, in some surprise; "well, that depends on what you mean by sentiment."

"So it does," said Grimes, thoughtfully; "'sentiment' 's a big word, embracin' a whole world of idees extunnel and intunnel. Wal, what I meant to ask was this, — have you ever detected in me any tendency to lay an undoo stress upon the beautiful?"

"The beautiful; well, no, I don't think I have."

"The beautiful in — in woman, for fidential voice.

"Woman? Oho, that 's it, is it? What, do you mean to say that you 've got a shot from that quarter? What, you! Why the very last man I should have suspected would have been California Grimes."

"Man," said Grimes, in a meditative way, "is a singular compound of strength and weakness. I have my share of physical, mental, and I may add moral strength, I suppose; so I may as well acknowledge the corn, and confess to a share of physical, mental, and moral weakness. Yes, as you delicately intimate, I have been struck from that quarter, and the sole cause of my present flight is woman. Yes, sir."

And, saying this, Grimes raised himself to an erect position, and, rubbing his short shingled hair with some violence, he stared hard at his friend.

"A woman!" said Carrol. "Queer, too. You, too, of all men! Well, I would n't have believed it if you yourself had not said so. But do you mean to say that you 're so upset that you 're going to run for it? Why, man, there must have been some difficulty. Is that it?"

"Wal, somethin' of that sort. Yes, we 'll call it a difficulty."

"May I ask who the lady is?" asked Carrol, after a pause.

"Certainly. It 's Mrs. Lovell."

"Mrs. Lovell!"

"Yes."

"The Devil!"

"Look here," said Grimes, "you need n't bring in that party in connection with the name of Mrs. Lovell; but at the same time I suppose you don't mean any harm."

"Of course not. Excuse me, old boy, but I was astonished."

"That 's the lady anyhow."

"Of course," said Carrol, "I knew you were acquainted with Mrs. Lovell, but I never dreamed that you were at all affected. How in-fernally odd! But how did it all come about?"

"Wal," said Grimes, "I got ac-

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You see I was in the cars once goin' to Buffalo and saw her aboard. That 's the first sight of her. I was on my way through to Frisco, but turned off after her to Niagara, lettin' my baggage slide. I watched her there for about a week, and at last one day I saw her goin' out alone for a walk. I followed her at a respectful distance. Wal, distance lent such an enchantment, that I ventured nigher, like a darned fly to a lighted candle. Suddenly a great gust of wind came and made my candle flare tremendously. By this I mean that the wind lifted her hat and fixin's from her head, and blew the whole caboodle clean over the cliff. In a moment I jumped after it — "

"What!" interrupted Carrol, "not over the cliff?"

"Yes, over the cliff. I tell you it was a sight that might have sent a fellow over a thousand cliffs. There she stood, as lovely as a dream, with her nat'ral hair all swingin' and tossin' about her head, like a nymph and a naiad and a dryad all rolled into one; and the sight of her was like a shock from a full-charged, double-barrelled galvanic battery, by jingo! So over the cliff I went, as I said, just stoppin' by the way to tell her I 'd get her hat and things. Now I tell you what it is, if it had been the falls of Niagara I 'd have gone over all the same; but as it happened it was only the cliff, a mile or so below, and for a man like me it was easy enough goin' down, — a man like me that 's got nerve and muscle and sinoo and bones and a cool head; though, mind you, I don't brag much on the coolness of my head at that particular moment. So over I went, and down I went. I found ledges of rocks and shelves; and it wa' n't hard climbin'; so I did the job easy enough: and as luck would have it, I found the hat not more than thirty or forty feet down, jammed among the rocks and trees where the wind had whirled it. Along with the hat I found the usual accompaniments of a lady's head-gear. I secured them all and worked my teeth.

"Wal, I got up to the top and looked around. To my amazement the lady was nowhere to be seen. She was gone. I then institooted a series of delicate inquiries round about, and found out where she was livin', and went there to return her the hat and fixin's. She wa' n't able to see me. Too agitated, you know. The agitation had been too much for her, no doubt, and had brought on a fever, accompanied by spasms and hysterics and other feminine pursuits. So I retreated, and on the followin' day called again. And what do you think I learned? Why she was gone, gone, sir, and for good; left, fled, sloped, vamoosed, — none of your transitory flights, but an eternal farewell to California Grimes. And I never in my life experienced the sensation of being dumbfounded until that moment.

"Wal, I wa' n't goin' to give her up. It ain't in me to knock under, so I set myself to find her. That job wa' n't over-easy. I did n't like to ask her friends, of course, and so in my inquiries after her I had to restrict myself to delicate insinuations and glittering generalities. In this way I was able to find out that she was a Canadian, but nothing more. This was all I had to go upon, but on this I began to institoot a reg'lar, systematic, analytic, synthetic, and comprehensive search. I visited all the cities of Canada and hunted through all the Directories. At length, in the course of my wanderings, I came here, and here, sure enough, I found her; saw her name in the Directory, made inquiries at the hotel, and saw that I had spotted her at last.

"Wal, the moment I found this out, that is, the day after, I went to see her. I found her as mild as milk, as gentle as a cooin' dove, as pleased as pie, and as smilin' as a basket of chips. She did n't really ask me in so many words to call again, but I saw that she expected it; and if she had n't, it would have been all the same, for I was bound to see more of her.

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state that I indulged in it for several months, and it was not till to-day that I was waked out of it. It was a very rude shock, but it broke up the dream, and I 'm now at last wide awake and myself again."

"By this I suppose I am to understand that your sentiments were not reciprocated."

"Very much. O yes; that 's the exact definition," said Grimes, dryly. "Yes — Wal — You see it wa' n't more than two hours ago. I went to see her. I told her all."

"Well?"

"Wal, she listened as patient as a lamb, and did n't interrupt me once. Now, as my story could n't have been very particularly interestin', I call that very considerate of her, in the first place."

"Well, and how did it end?"

"Wal, she did n't say anythin' in particular for some considerable time. At last I stopped. And then she spoke. And she presented me with a very sweet, soft, elegant, well-shaped, well-knit, dove-colored, tastefully designed, and admirably fittin' — mitten."

"And that was the end, was it?" said Carrol, gloomily; "jilted? You might have known it. It 's always the way."

"What 's that?" exclaimed Grimes; "always the way? No, it ain't, not by a long chalk. On the contrary, people are gettin' married every day, and never see a mitten at all."

"O, confound all women, I say!" growled Carrol. "It 's always the way. They 're so full of whims and fancies and nonsense, they don't know their own minds. They 've no sense of honor. They lead a fellow on, and smile on him, and feed their infernal vanity, and then if the whim takes them they throw him off as coolly as they would an old glove. I dare say there 's a way to get around them; and if a fellow chose to swallow insults, and put up with no end of whims, he might eventually win the woman he loves, jilts me, she may go to the Devil."

"It strikes me," said Grimes, "that you use rather strong language about the subject."

Carrol laughed bitterly.

"Well, old fellow," said he, "you 've been jilted, and whatever you feel you appear to take it quietly. Now, I 'm not so much of a philosopher, and so I take it out in a little swearing."

"You!" said Grimes, staring at the other in surprise. "What have you got to do about it?"

"O, nothing, — a little affair of my own. They say misery loves company, and if so, perhaps it'll be a comfort to you to know that I 'm in the same box."

"What 's that?" said Grimes; "the same what, — did you say 'box'?"

"Yes," said Carrol, while a heavy shadow passed over his face.

"What! not jilted?"

"Yes, jilted."

"Jilted? Good Lord! Not by a woman!"

"Well, I don't exactly see how I could have been jilted by anybody else," said Carrol, with a short laugh.

At this intelligence from Carrol, Grimes sat for a few moments in silence, staring at him and rubbing his hand slowly over his shingled hair.

"Wal," he said at length, "it strikes me as queer, too. For you see I 'm kind o' modest about myself, but I 'm free to say that I always regarded you not merely as a man, but also as one who might be a lady's man. A fellow of your personal appearance, general build, gift of gab, and amiable disposition hain't got any call, as far as I can see, to know anythin' whatever of the nature of a mitten."

"In spite of all these advantages," said Carrol, quietly, "I 've got my own particular mitten in my own possession. I 've got it in the shape of a beautiful little note, written in the most elegant lady's hand imaginable."

"A note? What do you mean by a note?"

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pened, was done up in writing."

"Writing! Do you mean to say that you wrote a letter about such a matter?"

"Yes, that was the way it was done."

"A letter!" exclaimed Grimes, in strong excitement. "What! Do you mean to say that you, with all your advantages, descended so low as to write a letter to the woman you pretended to love about a thing of such unspeakable importance. Good Lord! Of all the darn'dest —"

And Grimes sank back in his chair, overwhelmed by the idea.

"Well," said Carrol, "I acknowledge that a letter is a very inferior sort of way of making a proposal, but in my case there was no help for it. I had to do it, and, as it's turned out, it seems to me to be a confoundedly lucky thing that it was so, for it would have been too infernally mortifying to have had her tell me what she did tell me, face to face."

"Who is the lady?" asked Grimes, after a solemn pause. "Is it any secret?"

"O no, I'd just as soon tell you as not. It's Miss Heathcote."

"Miss Heathcote!" said Grimes, in surprise.

"Yes."

"What! Mrs. Lovell's sister?"

"Yes."

"Good thunder!"

"It's deuced odd, too," said Carrol. "You and I seem to have been directing our energies toward the same quarter. Odd, too, that neither of us suspected the other. Well, for my part, my case was a hard one. Miss Heathcote was always with her sister, you know, and I never had a decent chance of seeing her alone. I met her first at a ball. We often met after that. We danced together very frequently. I saw her two or three times by herself. I used to call there, of course, and all that sort of thing, you know. Well, at last I found myself pretty far gone, and tried to get an opportunity; but somehow or other, her sister seemed to monopolize her all the time, and I really had n't a fair chance. Well, you know, I could n't manage to see her alone, and at last I could n't stand it any longer, and so I wrote.

"Now, mind you, although I had seen her alone only two or three times, yet I had very good reasons to suppose that she was *very* favorable to me; a woman can give a man all sorts of encouragement, you know, in a quiet way. It seemed to me that there was a sort of understanding between us. In the expression of her face, in the tone of her voice, and in other things which I cannot mention, I saw enough to give me all the encouragement I wanted.

"Very well, I wrote as I said, and I got an answer. It was an answer that came like a stroke of lightning. Now, under ordinary circumstances, if a woman rejects a fellow, there is no reason why she should not do it in a kind sort of a way. Her very nature ought to prompt her to this. If, however, there had been anything like encouragement given to the unfortunate devil who proposed, it certainly would not be presumptuous to expect some sort of explanation, something that might soften the blow. Now in my case the encouragement had really been strong. Very well; I wrote, — under these circumstances, mind you, — I wrote, after I had been encouraged, — actually encouraged, mind you, after she had given me every reason to hope for a favorable answer, — and what — what do you think was the sort of answer that I really did get? What?! Why, this!"

And Carrol, who by this time had worked himself into a state of intense excitement, snatched a letter from his pocket and flung it toward Grimes.

The act was so suddenly done that Grimes had not time to raise his hand to catch it. The letter fell upon the floor, and Grimes, stooping down, raised it up. He then read the address in a very solemn manner, after

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following: —

"DEAR SIR: I have just received your letter, and regret *very deeply* that you have written to me on *such a subject.* I'm sure I am not aware of anything in our mutual relations that could give rise to a request of such a nature, and can only account for it on the ground of sudden impulse, which your own good sense will hardly be able to justify. I trust that you will not think me capable of giving unnecessary pain to any one; and that you will believe me when I say that it is *absolutely impossible* for me to entertain your proposal for one moment.

"Very truly yours,
"MAUD HEATHCOTE."

"Short, sharp, and decisive," was the remark of Grimes, after he had read the note over two or three times; and with these words he replaced the paper in the envelope and returned it to Carrol.

"Now, mind you," said Carrol, "she had given me as much encouragement as a lady would think proper to give. She had evidently intended to give me the idea that she was not indifferent to me, and then — then — when I committed myself to a proposal, she flung this in my face. What do you think of that, for instance?"

"It's a stunner, and no mistake," said Grimes, solemnly.

"Well," said Carrol, after another pause, "I've found out all about it."

"Found out?"

"Yes, her little game. O, she's deep! You would scarcely believe that so young a girl had such infernal craft. But it's born in them. The weaker animals, you know, are generally supplied with cunning, so as to carry out the great struggle for existence. Cunning! Cunning is n't the word. I swear, of all the infernal schemes that ever I heard of, this one of Miss Heathcote's was the worst. A deep game, yes, by heaven! And it was only by the merest chance that I found it out."

went on.

"You see, in the first place, she's been playing a double game all this time."

"A double game?"

"Yes, two strings to her bow, and all that, you know."

"O, another lover!"

"Yes, that miserable French vagabond that calls himself the Count du Potiron."

"Potiron! What! that infernal skunk?"

"Yes."

"What! Do you mean to say that Miss Heathcote would condescend to look at a fellow like that? I don't believe it. She would n't touch him with a pair of tongs. No, by thunder!"

"Well, it's a fact, as I know only too well."

"Pooh! you're jealous and imagine this."

"I don't! I have proof."

"What proof?"

"What proof? Wait till you hear my story."

"Fire away then."

"Well, this fellow, Du Potiron, has only been here a few weeks, but has managed to get into society. I saw him once or twice hanging about Mrs. Lovell's, but, 'pon my soul, I had such a contempt for the poor devil that I never gave him a thought beyond wondering in a vague kind of way how the Devil he got there. But, mind you, a woman is a queer creature. Miss Heathcote is aristocratic in her tastes, or, rather, snobbish, and anything like a title drives her wild. The moment she saw this fellow she began to worship him, on account of his infernal sham nobility. The fellow's no more a count than I am, I really believe; but the name of the thing is enough, and to live and move and have her being in the presence of a real live count was too much for her. At once the great aim of her life was to become a countess."

"Wal," said Grimes, as Carrol paused, "you seem somehow or other to have

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"I tell you I know it all," said Carrol, savagely. "Wait till you hear all. Mind you, I don't believe that she was altogether indifferent to me. I think, in fact, she rather liked me; and if I'd been a count, I don't know that she would have turned me off, unless she'd met with some member of a higher order of nobility. Besides, she did n't feel altogether sure of her Count, you know, and did n't want to lose me, so she played fast and loose with me; and the way she humbugged me makes my blood boil now as I think of it. There was I, infatuated about her; she, on her part, was cool and calculating all the time. Even in those moods in which she pretended to be soft and complaisant, it was only a miserable trick. She always managed to have her sister around, but once or twice contrived to let me be alone with her, just in order to give me sufficient encouragement to keep me on. But with the Frenchman it was different. He had no end of privileges. By heaven, I believe she must herself have taken the initiative in that quarter, or else he would never have dared to think of her. In this way, you see, she managed to fight off any declaration on my part, until she had hooked her Count. O, it was a deep game, and many things are clear to me now that used to be a puzzle!

"Well, you know, so the game went on, she trying to bag her Count, and at the same time keeping a firm hold of me, yet managing me so as to keep me at a distance, to be used only as a *dernier ressort*. Well, I chafed at all this, and thought it hard; but, after all, I was so infatuated with her that I concluded it was all right; and so it was that no idea of the actual fact ever dawned upon my poor dazed brains. But at last even my patience was exhausted, and so I wrote that letter. And now mark this. She had managed the whole affair so neatly that my letter came to her just after she had succeeded in her little game, won her Count, smile of scornful pity must have come over her face as she read my letter! You can see by her reply what she felt. The prospect of becoming a countess at once elevated her into a serene frame of mind, in which she is scarcely conscious of one like me; and she 'really does n't know of anything in our mutual relations which could give rise to such a request as mine.' Is n't that exquisite? By heavens! I wonder what she would have said if I had happened to write my letter a fortnight ago. I wonder how she would have wriggled out of it. She'd have done it, of course; but I confess I don't exactly see how she could have contrived it without losing me altogether. And just then she would n't have lost me for the world. I was essential to her. She wanted me to play off against the Frenchman. I was required as a decoy-duck —"

"See here, my son," interrupted Grimes, "these are terrible accusations to bring against a woman that you'd have laid down your life for only a week ago. It's all very well for you to talk, but how do I know that this ain't all your infernal jealousy? How am I to know that these are all facts?"

"In the simplest way in the world; by hearing me out. I have n't come yet to the point of my story. It was only last evening that I found this out. And this is what I'm now coming to. You see, after I got her letter I was so confounded that I really did not know what to think or say. I had a vague idea of going to see her and have a personal explanation."

"That would have been sensible and manly," said Grimes.

"No, it would n't," said Carrol, sharply; "and as things are, it's well I did n't. Besides, I could n't. I felt too much cut up. I was stung to the soul, and it seemed as if all the light of my life had suddenly gone out. No; fortunately my pride sustained me, and I was saved from making an infernal ass of myself by exhibiting my weakness

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dwell upon this. I 'll only say that I did n't feel equal to anything for a couple of days, and then I sent her a few words of farewell.

"Very well. Last evening I sent this letter of farewell, and then went off to the Magog House, in order to make some arrangements for quitting town this morning. I had made up my mind to leave at once and forever. I was going off for good. I did n't know where, and did n't care, so long as I had this place behind me. So I went to the Magog House. After attending to the business for which I had come, I went to the bar, and sat down with a cigar, thinking over my situation. Well, I had n't been sitting there long, before a couple of fellows came in and went up to the bar. One was Du Potiron. He was talking very volubly, and was evidently in a great state of excitement."

"Was he drunk?" asked Grimes.

"No, quite as usual; only excited, you know."

"Ah, well, it 's all the same. Frenchmen never get drunk, because they are naturally intoxicated. A sober Frenchman is a good deal like a drunken Yank."

"I did n't pay any attention to what he was saying," resumed Carrol. "My back was turned to the bar, and I was taken up altogether with my own thoughts, when suddenly I heard Du Potiron mention the name of Miss Heathcote. Now, you know, all his excitement had been about some wonderful good fortune of his, for which he was receiving his friend's congratulations, and in honor of which he had invited him to take a drink. It is n't a French custom, but Du Potiron has evidently been long enough in America to know American ways. So Du Potiron had come in to treat his friend. Now I heard all this congratulation in a vague way, and understood that it had something to do with a lady; but when Miss Heathcote's name was mentioned, the whole diabolical truth flashed upon me. I was perfectly not able to move, and scarce able to breathe, listening to the fellow's triumphant boasts. He boasted of his good fortune, — how she had favored him, how his whole acquaintance with her had been one long triumph, and how she had fallen at last like ripe fruit into his hands. And this rat I had to listen to; for I tell you I could n't move and could scarcely breathe. I was suffocating with fury.

"At last I got up and went over to him.

"'Look here,' said I, 'you 're talking about a lady who is a friend of mine, in a public bar-room, and it seems to me that it is time to call you to account.' I said this very coolly and quietly, for I did n't want the Frenchman to see how excited I was.

"He looked at me in great surprise, and then said, 'Excuse me, sare, de lady that I haf spik of haf commit her name an' her honneur to me, an' no personne haf any claim to champion her but only me.'

"'Pooh,' said I, 'I don't believe you have any claim of the sort. When I saw her last, she had n't the remotest intention of anything of the kind.'

"I dare say my tone was very offensive, for the Frenchman turned very pale, and his eyes blazed with fury.

"'You don't belief,' said he. 'Aha! You insulta me. Ver' well. I sall haf satisfaction for de insult. An' so you don't belief. Ver' well. You sall belief dis. Ha! Ef you are so grand friend an' champion, you sall tell me wat you tink of dees!'

"And with these words he tore a letter from his pocket, and flourished it before my face. I saw the handwriting. It was hers. The letter was addressed to him. And in that one instant every boast of his was confirmed by her own signature, and I saw at once the infernal depth of her crafty, scheming nature. And, by heaven! she 'll find that she 's got things before her that will interfere a little with her brilliant prospects."

Carrol paused. His face grew dark,

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showed that his words contained something more than empty menace.

"Well?" asked Grimes, anxiously.

"Well," said Carrol, "at that I lost all control over myself, and I knocked him down. He jumped up, and turned upon me in a fury.

"'You sall gif me sateesfaction for dis!' he screamed.

"'Certainly,' said I.

"'You sall hear from me, sare.'

"'Very well,' said I; and then, as I did n't see any use in staying there longer, I went off. Well, this morning I got a challenge from him, and this is the thing that has prevented my departure, and has brought me to you. Otherwise, it is n't likely that we should have met again, unless, indeed, we had happened to turn up together at the same place in the middle of Crim Tartary. You see, I want you to be my second."

"Your second?" said Grimes, and fell into a deep fit of musing.

IV.

DEALINGS WITH "MOOSOO."

GRIMES sat for some time in profound silence.

"Of course, you 'll oblige me," said Carrol, at length, somewhat impatiently.

"Me? O, you may rely upon me; but, at the same time, I want you to understand that there 's difficulties in the way. Besides, I don't approve of this."

"Difficulties? Of course. Duels are against the law, and all that. No one fights duels here; but sometimes nothing else will do."

"So you want to fight?" asked Grimes.

"Yes," said Carrol, fiercely. "Law or no law, I want to fight — to the death. This is now the only thing that I care for. I want to let *her* see that she has n't been quite so successful as she imagines, and to put some obstacle in the way of that serene and

shall learn, if I can teach her, the old, old lesson, that the way of the transgressor is hard."

"Are you a good shot?" asked Grimes, in a mild voice.

"No."

"Then how do you propose to pop Moosoo?"

"Well, I 'll have a shot at him."

"Are you aware that while you are firin' he 'll be firin' too?"

"Well?"

"Are you aware that Moosoo is a first-rate shot?"

"I did n't know it."

"Well, I do know it, for I happen to have seen somethin' of it!"

"O, I don't care a curse whether he 's a good shot or not."

"Wal, it makes a good deal of difference, as a general thing. You don't know anythin' about fencin', I s'pose?"

"No."

"Wal, you 've got to be precious careful how you enter on this dool."

"I tell you," cried Carrol, impatiently, "that I don't care a curse whether I 'm shot or not."

"And I tell you, you do care. If Moosoo hits you, it 's another feather in his cap. He 'll return to the lady covered with laurels. 'See, the conquerin' hero comes.' She 'll receive her warrior home from the wars. 'Gayly the Troubadour touched his guitar.' He 'll be 'Gayly the Troubadour,' and you 'll be simply contemptible. What 'll become of all your fine plans of retaliation, if you have to hobble about for thirteen months on a broken leg, or move in society with your arm in a sling? What 'll become of you, if you 're suddenly called upon to exchange worlds, and pass from this festive scene to become a denizen of the silent sepulchre? Answer me that."

Carrol said nothing. But his face flushed, and it was evident that these suggestions were not without effect.

"Secondly, my brethren," continued Grimes, "I desire to call your attention

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You, who can't shoot, go to meet a man who can. What do you call that? I call it simple suicide. Has Moosoo such claims on you that you are ready to offer up your life to him? You 'll fall. He 'll fly. The lady 'll join him in New York, an' he 'll convey her to his home in Paris. Unfair? Why, it 's madness to think of it?"

"It 's deuced odd if I can't hit a man at such a short distance."

"'T ain't so easy. Have you ever tried?"

"No."

"Wal, I have, and I know what I 'm talkin' about. I tell you, you won't hit him; and that 's why I have my prejudices against the orthodox dool."

"What do you mean by the orthodox duel? There 's only one kind."

"Excuse *me*," said Grimes. "There are other ways, — dools with knives, dools with rifles, dools with axes, and so forth. By the orthodox dool I mean the fashionable sort, that they originated in Europe. Now I want you to understand, in the first place, that the orthodox dool is unfair, unjust, and unwise. Secondly, I want you to know that the dool is not restricted to any one mode, but that it has many forms throughout this green earth. And thirdly, I want you to see that in this particular case we must originate a dool which shall be adapted to said case in all its bearin's."

"Originate a duel? What do you mean?"

"Wal, I mean this; you 're the challenged party."

"Yes."

"Wal, the challenged party has the choice of weepins."

"Yes."

"And that means, furthermore, that the challenged party has the choice of modes."

"Modes?"

"Yes, — the when, the where, and the how; and the what, and the which, and the whuffore; so you see it becomes your proud privilege to select most in accordance with your own peculiar situation."

"Well," said Carrol, "I certainly don't want him to have *all* the advantages."

"Just so, and so it remains for us to consider the various kinds of dool, and to decide upon that mode which shall best secure a perfect equality between you two combatants. Now I happen at this moment to think of a plan by which both parties are on terms that are as nigh to equality as is ever permitted in this vale of tears. It is this. The two doolists either sit or stand close beside one another, and each one holds the muzzle of his pistol close to the forehead of the other. The word is called, 'One! two! three!' and at the word 'three' both fire. The result, as a general thing, is that neither one has any occasion to complain that the other had any undoo advantage over him. Now how does that strike you?"

Grimes asked this question with an air of paternal interest; with the manner, in fact, which a fond father might assume in asking his son's opinion about some particularly pleasant mode of going to Europe for a year's ramble.

Carrol's brow lowered darkly, and an air of steady and stern resolve came over his face.

"I 'll do it," said he; "I will, by heaven. That is the mode I 'll choose. He shall not take refuge in his skill, and I will not give him the chance of surviving me. It shall be a life-and-death affair. If I die he shall die also. Then my lady will learn that I am a subject for something else than jeers and laughter. By heaven!" he continued, starting to his feet, "that shall be my choice, and I 'll have it settled at once."

"O, come now," said Grimes, "not so fast! We must n't snatch at the first suggestion. Let 's talk the matter over further. Come, sit down again, and let 's talk it over like Christian men. For my part, I 'm not altogether

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much downright butchery in it; and it don't afford a ghost of a chance for the display of the finer feelings and instincts of humanity. Sit down again, my son. Don't be in a hurry. It 's an important matter, and our deliberations should be grave and solemn."

At this appeal Carrol resumed his seat, and waited somewhat impatiently for further suggestions.

"The orthodox dool," said Grimes, "gives you no chance; the one just mentioned is downright butchery, and may be called the slaughter dool. These are both at the opposite extremes. Now we want to hit upon the golden mean; something that may combine the perfect fairness of the slaughter dool with the style, grace, sprightliness, and picturesque force of the orthodox dool.

"Now how can the problem be solved?" continued Grimes, after long and patient thought, the effects of which were visible in the numerous wrinkles of his corrugated brow. "How can we get the golden mean? Methinks I see it, — O, don't be impatient! Methinks I have it, and I 'll give you the idee.

"You see, it 's this, my son. If a good shot meets a bad shot, the fight is unfair; but there are circumstances under which this inequality can be removed. If they fight in the dark, for instance, what advantage has one over the other? None whatever. Now I contend that darkness is every way suited to a dool. In the first place, a dool is a deed of darkness. In the second place, the combatants are on an equal footing. In the third place, it is secure from interruption. In the fourth place, it prevents any identification of the survivor in a court of law in case of his arrest. Seventeen other reasons equally good are in my mind now, but I forbear to enumerate them. But you yourself must see the immense superiority of a dool of this kind over any other. You must see how it answers the demands of the present occasion. Take your enemy into the dark. Deprive him of every advantage which accident gives him. Put yourself and him on an equal footing. Stand there, face to face and front to front, in the dark, and then blaze away. Them 's my sentiments."

Grimes stopped, and watched Carrol in silence to see the effect of his suggestion. Not a word was spoken by either for a long time.

"A duel in the dark!" said Carrol, at length. "It 's a new idea to me, but 'pon my soul, my dear fellow, I must say it strikes me rather favorably just now. I don't relish the idea of being nothing more than a mere target, and of letting *her* have it all her own way; and then again, though I 'm willing to accept what you call the slaughter dool, yet I confess I should prefer a mode of fighting in which death is not an absolutely inevitable thing; and so, on the whole, it really seems to me as if the plan might not be a bad one; and I think we had better decide upon it. But where could it come off? Are the nights dark enough?"

"O yes, there 's no moon now."

"The best place would be under the shadow of some woods, I suppose."

"O no, the room of some house would be the best place."

"What! a house? inside a house?"

"Yes."

"Why, where could we find one that would be suitable?"

"Wal, that is a matter which we must see about. I can undertake that job, and I 'll go about it at once. I 've got a place in my mind now. Would you care about takin' a walk and seein' it?"

Carrol made no reply, but rose from his seat and prepared to accompany his friend.

Quitting the house, the two friends walked down the street, and took a direction which led out of town. They had not gone far before they saw a carriage approach, and both of them at once recognized the elegant barouche and spirited bays of Mrs. Lovell. Two ladies were in the carriage, and they

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they did not care to meet at this particular moment. But retreat or even evasion was quite out of the question. The carriage was coming toward them at a rapid pace, and the next corner was too far away to afford a way of escape. Of course they could not think of turning round and walking back, so they kept on in the direction in which they were going.

The ladies saw them at once and looked fixedly at them. Mrs. Lovell's face was slightly flushed, and there was on it an air of embarrassment; but in spite of this there was a pretty smile which curved her rosy lips and dimpled her rounded cheeks in a highly fascinating way. But Maud was very different. Her face was pale, and her sad eyes fixed themselves with mournful earnestness on Carrol, throwing at him a glance of eager, wistful entreaty.

As the carriage came up, Grimes looked toward it, and caught Mrs. Lovell's glance, and saw her smile. She bowed in the most marked manner possible; and Grimes removed his hat and made a very low bow in return. While doing this he stood still, and after he had performed this ceremony he turned and stared after the carriage with a flushed face for more than a minute. Then with a sigh he resumed his walk, but found to his surprise that Carrol had walked ahead for some considerable distance.

If there had been a difference between the expressions of Mrs. Lovell and Maud, there had certainly been a corresponding difference between the demeanor of Carrol and that of Grimes on this momentous occasion. Each had been equally agitated at this unexpected meeting, but each had shown his emotion in a different way. The way of Grimes has already been described. But while Grimes allowed his eyes to be drawn to the spot where his idol sat enthroned in her chariot, Carrol refused to let his eyes wander at all. At that moment he was like the gladiator on his way to the arena passing before the throne of Cæsar. *Moriturus* spairing and imbittered soul; and deep within his heart was a conviction of the utter baseness of that beautiful girl who had betrayed him. Had she not encouraged him with false hopes? Had she not led him on? Had she not made him her tool, her decoy-duck, through whom she might gain the object of a vulgar and contemptible ambition? Was not all his life ruined through her? Was he not going even now to his death, — he, the doomed gladiator? *Moriturus te salutat?*

He looked straight ahead, not allowing his eyes to rest on her, — his pale features set in an expression of icy calm, an expression very different from the frank joyousness which Maud so well remembered. Yet he did not forget the salutation, — even though he was going to die, — but as the carriage rolled by he raised his hat and so walked on.

After a time Grimes caught up to him, and the two walked on together. Neither one said a word, for each one had thoughts which he did not feel inclined to express in words. At length, after about an hour's walk, in which they had gone about two miles out of the town, they came within sight of an old house.

"Thar," said Grimes, "that's the place; what do you think of it?"

"O, I dare say it'll do well enough," said Carrol, in an absent way.

"I say," said Grimes, "gather up your wits, and be a man. It was an infernally unlucky thing that we met them, but it could n't be helped, nohow, and I 've been upset ever since; but what 's the use of miaulin like a darned cat over a drownded kitten! I won't, for one."

Saying this, Mr. Grimes drew a long breath, and then proceeded to pound his chest vigorously with his two brawny fists, in the fashion which Mr. Du Chaillu ascribes to the cheerful gorilla. This pleasant exercise seemed to do Mr. Grimes a world of good; for after he had struck a number of blows, each of which, if dealt upon an enemy,

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state of pitiable harmlessness, he said briskly and sharply, "Wal, now let 's get to business."

The deserted house stood about a hundred yards from the road. Carrol followed his friend in silence as he passed through a broken gateway and over what had once been a garden to the house. There were no doors or windows in the house, and there was a general air of desolation about it that was oppressive.

"Wal," said Grimes, "will this suit?"

"Anything 'll suit," said Carrol, coldly.

"You agree to this kind o' fightin'?"

"I agree to anything," said Carrol. "We 've talked all that over."

"So we have, but this sort of fightin' presupposes a desperate mind."

"Well, I tell you, I *am* desperate. I don't care whether I live or die. I 've seen the last of that treacherous she-devil, and only want to live long enough to put one drop of bitterness in her cup. But what 's the use of talking? Give me that Frenchman and put me in here with him. That 's all I want."

"Darkness," said Grimes, solemnly. "sometimes has a depressin' effect on the human nerve. Can you stand that?"

"O, damn the human nerve!" growled Carrol. "I tell you I can stand anything."

"I 'm afraid you 're just a mite too excited, my son; but then, temperaments differ. Now the prospect of a good, rousin' fight has a kind of cheerin' effect on me, and makes me a Christian in one sense, for I get almost to love my enemy."

"Well, I 've a different feeling toward my enemy," said Carrol; "so now let 's go and finish up this business as soon as we can. It must be done up to-night."

"So say I; for I 've *got* to go," said Grimes. "I 'll go now after Moosoo. Where shall I see you?"

"At your rooms. I won't go back lows."

On reaching the town again Grimes went off, and Carrol went to the rooms of his friend, where he awaited the result.

In about two hours Grimes came back.

"Wal," said he, "you 're in the dark here. Suppose we have some light on the subject." And he proceeded to light up. "Won't you smoke?"

Carrol said nothing, but began to fill a pipe in an abstracted way, while Grimes filled another.

"Wal," said he, "I 've been and seen 'em; and a precious hard time I 've had of it, too. They 're both Moosoos, and your Moosoo and his friend, bein' foreigners, had a most unnat'ral prejudice against the mode of combat decided on by you. And it 's taken me full two good hours to beat into their frog-eatin' heads that this is the only fair, just, equitable, unpartial, and reasonable mode of fightin' recognized among high-toned men. And so it is. For look at me. I 'm a high-toned man. Wal, I give my vote clean in favor of it.

"Moosoo's friend is a fellow-countryman of his who came out with him to America; and as they have neither of them been here more than two or three months, they show an ignorance and a prejudice and a stoopidity that is incredible. Why, they actilly had the audacity to quote their infernal frog-eatin' French customs against me, — me that 's been brought up on the Californy code. But I managed precious soon to show them that their small Paris fashions wa' n't a circumstance out here.

"You must understand that first of all I saw only his friend, but he found my proposition so disagreeable, and, as he called it, so monstrous, that he had to consult Moosoo himself, and gradually I was worked into the conversation with the principal. Fortunately, I can talk their language as fast as they can, with a good, strong,

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and is the only safeguard to the moral nature of a free American when he doos speak French.

"Wal, I found Moosoo as venomous as a rat, and as thirsty for your blood as a tiger. He felt confidence in his own skill, and was as sure of you as he would be of his dinner, yea, perhaps more so. And this was the very thing I tackled him about at the outset. I showed him that we, bein' the challenged party, had a right to define our weepins and locate the scene of action. I showed that we were bound to look after our rights, privileges, and appurtenances, and not let him have it all his own way. I then went on to show that the proposed mode was at once sound, just, fair, wise, equitable, and honest. Wal, the blind prejudice of Moosoo was amazin', I never saw anythin' like it. All my arguments about fairness, equity, and abstract right were thrown away. So, then, I had to bring before him my second point, namely, that this is the custom of the country."

"What, to fight duels in the dark?"

"Wal, no, not precisely that, but to fight accordin' to the will of the challenged party. As for fightin' in the dark, I showed that this of itself was not *the* custom, but still it was *a* custom of the country, and as such deserved to be regarded with veneration by foreigners, and adopted by them whenever it was the desire of an American who might be the challenged party. This argument was one which they did n't find it so easy to meet. They fit against it like all-possessed; but my position was an impregnable one, and they could no more shake me from it than a couple of bumblebees could uproot the giant tree that lifts its gorgeous head from the midst of the primeval forest. No, sir. And finally, as a settler, I brought up Californy. I described its wealth of resources, animal, vegetable, and mineral; its giant mountains, its sunless valleys, its broad plains, its stoopendous trees; I dilated upon the Yosemgave them estimates of our annual commerce; I explained our school law, our criminal law, and our specie currency. I informed them that Californy was at once the brain, the heart, and the right arm of the broad continent; that Californy usage was final throughout America, and that Californy sanctioned the mode proposed.

"Wal, now, Moosoo was dreadful disinclined to fight a duel in the dark. He was bloodthirsty and venomous, but at the same time I detected in him a dash of timidity, and the prospect of this kind of a meetin' upset him a little. It's either natural timidity croppin' out, or else it's a kind of superstition, perhaps both; and whatever it was it made him refuse this dool for a long time. But Californy settled him. The supreme authority of America was somethin' they could n't object to.

"Wal, I redooced them to submission, and then it only remained to settle the details. Wal, first and foremost, we are to go there, — all of us together. Wal, then the seconds are to put the principals in the room whar the business is to be transacted. Wal, then the seconds are to take their departure and fly."

"What's that? what?" asked Carrol, who had thus far listened without showing much interest. "Why should the seconds go?"

"Why should they stay?"

"Well, I don't know, except to see fair play."

"Wal, in the first place, as it's goin' to be pitch dark the seconds won't be able to see anything; in the second place, the very essence of the whole thing is that the fighters be left to their own natural instincts; and in the third place, if no one sees it there won't be any witnesses for the lawyers to get hold of in case the survivor is tried for his life."

"And do you really mean to say that you're going away? Won't you stay till — till —" Carrol hesitated.

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Me! — me stay! And here! What, here! Are you mad? Don't you see my trunk? Have n't you heard my mournful story? Ought n't I even now to be rollin' along on my windin' way? No. I leave this place at once and forever; and I 'm only waitin' to be of service to an old friend in the hour of need; and, my son, I 'll shake hands with you when we part, and bid you good by, with the hope that we may at last meet again whar partin's air unknown."

Midnight was the hour settled upon for the duel, and about half past eleven Grimes and Carrol called on the Frenchmen. They were ready. Du Potiron looked pale and nervous; in which respect Carrol was fully his equal. Du Potiron's friend looked dark and sullen. Grimes alone showed anything like ordinary good feeling. He was calm, urbane, chatty, and at times even jocose. He had the manner of one who was putting a strong restraint upon himself, but underneath this restraint there was an immense pressure of riotous feeling that at times surged up mightily. The feeling was the furthest possible from grief or anxiety. Was it natural cold-heartedness in this man that allowed him at such a time to be capable of such levity, that permitted him, while accompanying an intimate and trusting friend on such an errand, to have no thought of that friend's impending doom?

So they marched on, the four of them; first Grimes and Carrol, then the two "Moosoos." After finding that his companions declined conversation, Grimes gave it up, and walked on in silence. Sometimes his huge frame would shake from his hat to his boots; and on one occasion he even went so far as to beat his breast, gorilla fashion, — a proceeding that excited much suspicion and anxiety in the minds of the foreigners.

Carrol noticed this, but did not think much about it. He was well acquainted with the eccentricities and extravagances of his friend, and did not see very different from usual. Once or twice, it is true, he could not help feeling that repressed laughter was a little out of place, but he accounted for it on the ground that Grimes was really troubled in his mind, and took this way of struggling with his emotion.

On the whole, however, Carrol did not give much thought to Grimes. As he walked on, his mind was occupied with the events of the last few days, and the dark rendezvous before him. In those few days were comprised all the real trouble he had ever known. He had never in his life quarrelled with any one, much less fought a duel; yet here in three days his heart had been filled with bitterness and hate and despair.

Nor amid these contending feelings was he least affected by a certain horror of soul arising from the meeting before him. He was going at that midnight hour to meet death or to inflict it. That gloomy, deserted house, under the midnight sky, was to be the scene; and in that house even now there awaited one of them, perhaps both, the King of Terrors.

Was it wonderful, then, that at such a time and on such an errand, there should have come over Carrol's soul a certain overwhelming and shuddering awe? Has not the greatest of singers shown this feeling in the soul even of Ajax while fighting in the dark? Carrol going in broad day to meet his enemy would have been animated solely by that vindictive hate which he had already manifested, and would have soothed himself by the hope of inflicting sorrow of some sort on Miss Heathcote; but Carrol at midnight, in the dark, on his way to that place of meeting, to encounter an unseen enemy, found himself a weaker being. He was unable to maintain his fierce vindictive hate. Wrath and fury subsided at the presence of that one feeling which in all human hearts is capable of overmastering all else, — the unspeakable sense of horror.

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DESPISED LOVE.

AFTER that unexpected meeting with Grimes and Carrol, the ladies drove home, and not a word was spoken by either. The house was not far away, and the drive was not long enough to allow them time to recover from the emotion which this meeting caused them. But over Maud's pale face, there came a hot angry flush, and her brows contracted into an indignant frown. She remained in her room longer than was strictly necessary for disrobing herself, and when she joined her sister she had become calmer.

"O Maudie darling," said Mrs. Lovell, "I thought you were never coming. I do *so* want to talk to you. Only think how very odd it was that I should meet him in that way. And he looked so awfully embarrassed. Did n't you notice it?"

"No," said Maud.

"Why, how strange! Well, you know, I never felt so cut up in all my life."

"Did you?"

"Positively. I assure you I believe I 'm growing prematurely old, and rapidly getting into my dotage. But how really magnificent he looked! I 'm so glad I saw him, and I 'm so glad he is n't coming here any more. Do you know, darling, I 'm more afraid of myself than ever? Really, I sometimes think that I 'm weaker than a child. How very fortunate for me it is that he has such real delicacy, and is so very punctilious and all that! Why, if he were different, one really could n't tell what might happen. O dear, how very fortunate it is that I 'm going to Paris! But, Maudie dear, did you notice what a leonine aspect he had?"

"Who?" asked Maud, languidly.

"Who? Why, how stupid! Why, *he*, Mr. Grimes, of course. You can't suppose that I meant Mr. Carrol. He looked anything but leonine. He was as white as a sheet, and as stiff as a statue."

Maud sighed.

Lovell, "it 's particularly fortunate for me that I 'm going to Paris. I feel that I 'm shamefully weak, and if I were to stay here I really don't know what would become of me. As it is I shall escape from him. Of course he will be here immediately, but I shall evade him. But, poor fellow," — and Mrs. Lovell sighed, — "how terribly cut up he will be when he finds that I am gone! And he won't know where in the world I have gone to. He would follow me, of course, to the world's end, but he can never, never think of Paris. Only he might think of it, and, O dear, if he were to find out, and follow me, what would become of me, Maudie? Do you know? I 'm sure I don't, or, rather, I do know, but it 's really too horrible to think of. I 've an immense amount of strength of character, and all that sort of thing, Maudie dearest, but really if I should see him in Paris I 'm afraid I should quite give up. I really do not know what resource I should have, unless I might fly home and take refuge with poor dear papa, and I 'm sure he 's had worry enough with me, and then only think what worry he 'd have if Mr. Grimes should pursue me there and see me again. What could poor dear papa do? He 's so awfully fond of me that he 's quite unreliable. He always lets me do just what I choose. Really, do you know, Maudie, I sometimes think it is quite heart-rending for one 's papa to be so very, very weak. I do really."

"Poor fellow!" said Maud, with a sigh.

"Poor *what?*" exclaimed Mrs. Lovell, looking in astonishment at Maud. "Really, Maudie, it strikes me that you have a very funny way of alluding to poor papa."

"Papa?" said Maud, "I did n't mean him. I meant — Mr. Carrol."

"O, Mr. Carrol. Well, Maudie, now that you remind me of him, it seems to me very odd. I thought he had bid you an eternal farewell, and all that. But it 's always the way with

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when they are in earnest. For my part, I don't believe they know, themselves. I really don't."

"He did n't speak," said Maud, in a voice of indescribable sadness, "he did n't even look at me, and I was so — I thought so much of him. And then you know I really was n't to blame."

"*You*, darling! *you* to blame! You never were to blame in your life, my sweet Maudie. And it breaks my heart to see you so sad. And I hate him. I really do. But that 's the way with men. Fickle, variable, creatures of mere impulse, prone to wander, obeying nothing but mere passion, whimsical, incapable of careful and logical thought. Really, Maudie dear, I have a very, very low opinion of men, and my advice to you is, never, never allow yourself to think too much of any one man. He 'll be sure to give you many a heart-ache. You follow my advice and do as I do."

"He looked so dreadfully pale, and sad, and careworn. It breaks my heart to think of it."

"Pale? Why, Maudie dear, you need never imagine that his paleness had anything to do with you. Do you know what such a fancy is? Why, it 's morbid."

"He would n't even look at me," said Maud. "And I longed so to catch his eye. I should have spoken to him."

"My dear Maudie, how very silly and unladylike! As to his paleness, that is all assumed. These men, dear, are really all actors. They wear masks, Maudie, they really do. You can't trust one of them. As for his paleness, I have no doubt it was simply indigestion, — or perhaps dissipation."

"Mr. Carrol is not at all dissipated," said Maud, indignantly.

"Well, dear, you need n't take one up so, and really, you know you don't know much about him. I dare say he 's very, very dissipated. At any rate, he 's very, very deceitful."

"Deceitful!"

Well, the first thing you know, you meet him calmly strolling about the streets."

"O," cried Maud, fervently, "if I had only known it, I should have written him at once and explained it all. But, O Georgie! I was so sure that he had gone away, and that thought filled me with despair."

"Really, Maudie, you use such strong language that I feel quite shocked. Despair? What do you know of despair? Wait till you 've had my experience."

And Mrs. Lovell sighed heavily.

"At any rate, Maudie," said she, after a brief silence, "one thing is quite plain to me, and that is, that he is at least very undecided. He really does n't know his own mind. He pretended to want you, and then he gave you up on account of a slight mistake. He wrote you solemnly, announcing his eternal departure, and yet he stayed here and wandered about on purpose to meet you and give you distress. And he does n't know his own mind at this moment."

Maud was silent.

"O yes," resumed Mrs. Lovell, "you 'll find it so, when you gain more experience, Maudie dearest, you 'll learn to think very little of the men. They are all so very undecided. Quite worthless, in fact. Now you 'll find that a man is never really worth anything till he gets a wife. And I suppose that 's one reason why they 're all so eager to be married. Quite unsettled till then. Why, look at Adam," continued Mrs. Lovell, speaking of the father of mankind in the same tone in which she would have alluded to some well-known friend,— "look at Adam. He was quite worthless, O, I assure you, he was really *quite* worthless, till his wife was presented to him. But, Maudie, when you think of it, what a very awkward meeting it must have been! Only themselves, you know, dear, and not a single soul to introduce them. I wonder how they managed it."

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And Mrs. Lovell paused, quite overcome by the inscrutable problem which was presented by this one idea.

To all of her sister's somewhat desultory remarks Maud seemed to pay but little attention. She sat with an abstracted look, occupied by her own thoughts; and so after Mrs. Lovell's daring flight of fancy on the subject of Adam, she sighed, and said: "I do wonder what kept him here. If I had only known it!"

"My dear," said Mrs. Lovell, "I'll tell you what kept him here. He did it to tease you. Men do so love to tease, and worry, and vex, and annoy. Men are always so. Really, when I come to think of it, I wonder why men were created, I do positively, though of course it's awfully wicked to make a remark of that kind, and seems almost like flying in the face of Providence. But perhaps it is the wisest plan in this life to try to make the best of our evils, instead of fighting against them, and I dare say it would be best for us to act on that principle with regard to men."

Maud took no notice of this. She rose from her chair in an excited way and said, "Georgie, I *must* write him."

"Write him! Why, my precious child!"

"I must, Georgie, I really must write him. It's been a terrible mistake, and my mistake, and I cannot let another hour pass without an explanation. It may be all too late, yet I must do it. I can never, never have any peace till I have explained it all."

"Well, Maudie, I must say I feel quite shocked at such a very unladylike proposal; but, darling, if you really feel so very disturbed, and agitated, and all that, why, I won't say one word; only do try to calm yourself, dearest; you are so pale and sad, and have been so utterly unlike yourself ever since that horrid letter, that it quite breaks my heart to look at you. So go, Maudie, and do whatever you like, and try to get that wretched man off your mind if you possibly can."

Maud sighed again, and left the room, while Mrs. Lovell leaned her head upon her hand and gave herself up to her own meditations.

After about an hour Maud came back with a letter in her hand.

"Well, darling?" said Mrs. Lovell, in an interrogative tone.

"Well," said Maud, "I've written him."

"Mind, darling, I don't approve of it at all. I only yielded to you because you were so sad. I believe that he has treated you in a shockingly cruel manner, and is now trying his best to make you miserable. This letter will only draw another one from him worse than the last."

"I cannot help it," said Maud, mournfully. "I had to write. It was my mistake. I owed him an explanation."

"You owed him nothing of the kind, Maudie darling. Women never owe men any explanations of any kind. You are too weak altogether. But that's always the way with women. They are always too magnanimous; they are never petty and selfish; they are too just; they allow themselves to be influenced too much by reason, and would often be better for a little dash of passion, or temper, or proper pride; and, Maudie dear, I do wish you would n't be so absurd."

"I have my share of proper pride," said Maud, quietly, "and enough to support me in the hour of trial. But I had to write this. I owed it to him. It was my own unfortunate mistake. I must explain this wretched blunder to him. If he will not receive this, why then I feel that my own pride and proper self-respect will sustain me, under all possible circumstances. And, Georgie dear, though I never suspected till now the real strength of my feelings, yet I am sure that if he should prove to be unworthy, I shall be able to overcome them, and succeed in time in casting him from my thoughts."

"You're too tragic, Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell, anxiously; "and I don't like to see you in this mood. But what

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“ Well, I explained the mistake, you know,” said Maud.

“ It was not at all necessary,” said Mrs. Lovell.

“ I told him how it happened,” said Maud, without noticing her sister's remark,— “ the two letters, my own excitement and agitation, and all that.”

“ Well, did you give him any reason to suppose that he would still be welcome ? ”

“ I certainly did,” said Maud. “ I wrote him in the same tone which I had used in the first unfortunate letter.”

Mrs. Lovell shook her head.

“ That was very, very unwise, Maudie dearest,” said she, “ you should have been more cautious. You should have shown him how cruel he was. You should have written your letter in such a way as to show him that *he* was altogether in the wrong, and then after making him feel proper repentance you might have hinted, merely hinted, you know, that you would not be altogether indisposed to forgive him, if he — if he showed himself sufficiently sorry for his fault.”

“ Well,” said Maud, “ I had to write as my heart prompted. I am incapable of any concealment; I am anxious to explain a mistake. I don't want anything more from him than — than an acknowledgment that he was mistaken in his cruel letter.”

At this juncture a caller was announced, and Maud, not feeling equal to the occasion, and being also anxious to send off her letter, took her departure.

When the caller had departed she rejoined her sister.

“ O Maudie,” said Mrs. Lovell, “ who do you think it was ? Why, Mrs. Anderson. And she told me such a shocking story about Mr. Carrol.”

Maud's face turned whiter than ever; she could not speak.

“ All the town 's talking about it,” said Mrs. Lovell. “ I told you he was dissipated, you know.”

“ Well, you know, it was last night. He had been with a party of his boon companions at some bar-room or other, and they had all been dissipating and carousing, and they all began to fight, and Mr. Carrol was the worst of them all, and he knocked them all down, and behaved like a perfect fiend. O, he must have behaved fearfully; and so you see, Maudie dear, there was very good reason why he should be pale to-day and not dare to look you in the face. He felt thoroughly ashamed of himself, and for my part I wonder how he dared to walk the streets.”

“ I don't believe it,” said Maud, indignantly; “ Mrs. Anderson is an odious old gossip.”

“ Well, all the town believes it,” said Mrs. Lovell, in a resigned tone; “ and so you see, Maudie, it 's quite true, as I 've always said, that you are very fortunate in getting rid of Mr. Carrol, and the time will come, and very soon I hope, when you will feel very glad that this has happened.”

“ I don't believe it,” said Maud, again, but in a tone that was a little less confident; yet as she said this she thought that it was not unnatural for a disappointed lover to seek solace in dissipation, and outdo his companions in extravagance, and as she thought of this her heart sank within her.

“ Well, I believe it,” said Mrs. Lovell, “ every word of it. For you know, Maudie dearest, that 's the way with the men. They are so weak, so childish, so impetuous, so wayward; and you know they are all so fond of getting intoxicated. Now we women never get intoxicated, do we, Maudie ? O, I assure you, if it were not for men the world would be a very different sort of a place, really it would, Maudie darling ! ”

The profound truth of this last remark was so evident that Maud did not seem inclined to dispute it; she sat in silence, pale, sorrowful, agitated, and wrapt up in her own mournful thoughts.

This explanatory letter was written

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Carrol's farewell. Before she sent it off, she wrote another to Du Potiron which was intended to make things clear to his mind. Having done this she waited for an answer.

She expected one on the following day, or rather she expected Carrol himself.

But the following day passed, and neither Carrol nor a letter came. Nor did one come from Du Potiron.

Maud felt more despondent than ever.

The next day passed, and no answer came from either.

This deepened Maud's despondency.

Then came the third day. No answer came. Maud began to feel resentful.

The fourth day passed. Still not a word came. By this time Maud's pride rose up in rebellion at such a wrong. She felt sure that Carrol was in the city, that he had received her letter and refused to answer it. So she determined to be as proud as he was. And this task she did not find a difficult one. To a nature like hers pride was the sure antidote to wounded affection.

On the fifth day she had lost all her despondency and sadness. Her pride sustained her fully, and a bitter mortification took the place of her former melancholy. She deeply regretted having written any explanation whatever.

On the sixth day they left Montreal for New York, to take the steamer for Europe; and as she took her departure, Maud's chief feeling was one of deep self-contempt and profound resentment against her false lover.

I will forget him, she thought to herself, as utterly as though he had never existed.

VI.

A DUEL IN THE DARK.

At length the party reached their destination.

It was past midnight. There was no moon, and overhead the sky was the stars. It was intensely dark. Around them there arose a grove of trees, through which the night wind sighed gently in a drear and mournful monotone. Beneath these trees the shadows fell darker, and the old house which stood near them was enveloped in a deeper gloom.

The house stood apart from the road, and from all other habitations. In the distance the city lay still and asleep. No wagons rolled along the highway; no familiar noises greeted their ears. The silence was oppressive.

The seconds had brought out all that might be needed, and among other things a lantern. This Grimes proceeded to light, and then the whole party entered the old house.

The front door was gone, as has been said. Entering this, they found themselves in the hall from which a stairway went up, and on each side of which were rooms. On the left was one large room extending across the house, while on the right there were two apartments. The party entered the large room on the left. Two doorways led into this apartment; the one in the rear was closed and the rusty lock still secured it, but in front the door was hanging by one hinge. There were four windows, two in front, and two in the rear. From all of these the glass was gone, and one of them had no sash at all. This one opened out on the rear of the house. The room was divided by an archway in the middle, in which there was an opening for sliding doors, but these had been taken away. It had a general air of the most forlorn kind. The paper hung loose upon the walls; the floor was damp, and rotten, with fungus growths visible along the surface; plaster had fallen from the ceiling, lying in heaps, and disclosing the laths above; the grates were gone, and in front of each chimney was a pile of soot.

One glance was sufficient to reveal all this and to show this room in its most forbidding aspect, even down to trivial details. Carrol stood with a rigid stare. Du Potiron glanced

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drew his second off to the back part of the room, and spoke a few words to him in a low voice. While they were speaking Grimes drew Carrol out into the hall.

"Several small details," said Grimes, "have been omitted in this here business, but you know what a devil of a hurry you were in. Besides we could n't bring a doctor, for the first thing requisite is secrecy. Whoever falls will have to put it through, and the other fellow 'll have to run for it 's quick as his darned legs 'll carry him. So now go ahead, my son, and I 'll just shake hands for good by."

"But you won't really leave a fellow," said Carrol, ruefully.

"Leave you? By jingo! I 've got to. Why look at me. Think of the state of my mind, and my trunk. O, I must go, — right straight off, — in a bee line for some place or other. I 'll just take a start, and where I pull up circumstances 'll have to decide. I 'm sorry I 'm not goin' to Californy, or I 'd ask you to drop in if you ever go that way. But I don't know where I 'll pull up, I don't know where I 'll go, the South Sea Islands p'aps, to civilize the natives, or China to export coolies, or Central Asia to travel; or p'aps up North to hunt up the North Pole. It 's all the same to me anyhow. So now, good by, till we meet to part no more."

With these words he seized Carrol's hand, wrung it heartily, and then went back into the room. Carrol followed in silence. On entering it again it looked worse than ever. Du Potiron was still talking, and he gave a hurried start as the others entered.

"You won't have much trouble with that Moosoo," whispered Grimes. "He 's as near dead now as can be."

"Well," said Carrol, in a stifled voice; "make haste."

"All right," said Grimes, and, calling the other second, he offered him one of two pistols.

"You see they did n't bring their for the occasion. You need n't be particular, though, about returnin' them. I 've got more."

Du Potiron's second took one of the pistols with a bow, and gave it to his principal. Grimes gave the other to Carrol.

After this Grimes went over to Du Potiron, and held out his hand. The Frenchman took it. Whereupon Grimes made him a speech, brief, but to the point, in French, which, as he himself said with honest and patriotic pride, had a strong Yankee accent. He informed him that he was in a free country, and in the society of free men; he exhorted him to be true to the immortal principles of '76, and visit Californy before his return to France. After which he wrung the Frenchman's hand hard, and left him.

Du Potiron gave a sickly smile, and bowed, but said nothing.

"His hand 's damp as a wet rag, and as cold as a corpse," whispered Grimes. "If it were daylight now he 'd be as venomous as a serpent, but the darkness takes away all his pison. And now, my son, for the last time, farewell forever."

With these words Grimes went out, carrying the lantern. Du Potiron's second followed.

"We will shut the door and call — one — two — three. Then you may blaze away whenever you darn like."

There was no answer.

The fallen door was then raised to its place, and shut, hanging by one hinge, and by the latch of the rusty lock. All was now darkness in the room. Some time was taken in adjusting the door, and much pulling and pushing and hammering and pounding was required before it could be properly fixed. The banging at the door echoed dismally through Carrol's heart, and seemed to shake the whole house. The night air sighed; the loose paper rustled; there seemed footsteps all around him. He thought Du Potiron was stealing toward him

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where he was, and thus be able to fire at once. There seemed a stealthy footfall, as of one cautiously advancing.

Carrol hastily retreated from the middle of the room where he had been standing, and moved backwards toward the wall. Once he stumbled and nearly fell over a heap of plaster, but recovered himself. Groping with his hands he found the partition for the sliding doors, and cautiously took up a position in the angle which it formed with the wall of the front room. Here he waited in feverish suspense, with his left hand stretched forward, his right holding forth the pistol, and his body bent in a wary, anxious, vigilant position, while his eyes strained themselves to detect through that gloom the advancing figure of his enemy.

But now the noises ceased, the door was secured, and he heard the voice of Grimes.

"*One!*"

A pause.

"*Two!*"

Another pause.

"THREE!"

After this there came the shuffle and tramp of footsteps; and the footsteps retreated from the house, till their sound died away in the distance.

Then silence remained.

For a time the silence was utter, and the only sound distinguishable by Carrol was the strong throb of his own heart. Other than this there was not a sound, not a breath, not a rustle. Eagerly he listened and anxiously for a renewal of that stealthy footfall which might announce the approach of his lurking foe. In vain. That foe now gave no sign. Evidently he had lost all trace of Carrol's position, and after moving forward he had been baffled by Carrol's retreat.

He stood in the attitude which has been described, not daring to move, rooted to the spot, with every muscle and every sinew and every nerve awake and on the alert to guard against his hidden foe; and stilling even his own breathing, lest it should reveal the secret of his position. For a long time he watched and waited and listened for some sound that might indicate the approach of his enemy. But the sound came not. Why should it? Would his enemy be rash enough to attempt to move further amid the rubbish that lay on the floor, over which it was not possible to walk without disclosing one's position? His enemy had attempted it only while the door was being secured, and while the noise attendant upon that operation might drown the lesser noise of his own footsteps. In that first attempt he had evidently been baffled. It was not likely that he would try it again.

The silence at length was broken by the gentle sighing of the wind. It came through the open windows; the loose paper on the walls again rustled and rattled as it swayed to and fro; and the solemn sound of the wind without, as it murmured through the trees of the grove, was wafted to his ears. Then the wind grew gradually stronger; and overhead he heard long moans and sighs, as the night blast passed through the halls and chambers of the deserted house. Coming through the windows it seemed to enter as if in search of something; and in that search to pass through every room, moaning in grief because it sought what it could not find; and then wailing out its long lamentation as it passed away in despair. And then there came other sounds; there were loose doors that creaked, and loose window-sashes that rattled, and the combined effect of these was sometimes such that it conveyed the idea of beings wandering overhead, the patter of whose footfalls was audible on the floor. And thus, in that tension of his quickened senses, every sound became exaggerated; and the aggregation of these grew at length to such proportions, that the reverberations of long-continued thunder would not be more manifest to the ordinary man than were these accumulated sounds to him.

To his eyes also, as they stared into the dark, the gloom seemed gradual-

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things which appeared and disappeared, the phantoms of night which chased one another across his perturbed vision. First there came the outlines of the windows gradually less indistinct, and growing more defined; while beyond their bars hung the sky, whose former blackness seemed lessening, till on the horizon which was visible to him it changed to a dull gray hue. But it was only through the windows that images of visible things could come to his eyes. Within the room was nothing but thick darkness, and the opposite wall, whose loosened paper-hangings rustled at the night blast, could not be discerned.

Now, out of all this state of things, in which the ears were overwhelmed by the exaggeration of minute sounds, while the eyes were baffled by the impenetrable gloom, there came upon him that feeling of which he had already known a foretaste, a feeling which was the sure result of an imagination quickened by such surroundings as these, a horror of Great Darkness; and at the touch of that horror his whole being seemed to sink away. Since material images no longer satisfied the craving of his eyes, his excited fancy supplied other forms, fashioned out of the stuff that dreams are made of. The enemy for whom he watched stood before him in thought, with vengeful face, cruel smile, and levelled pistol, ready to deal his doom, while lurking behind the form of his enemy there rose the Shadow of Death. Before that horrid apparition his nerveless hand seemed to lose control of his weapon; he shrank down, and, crouching low to avoid the blow, he fell upon one knee. But the blow did not fall, and the noise which arose from this change of position awakened no response.

Had there been a response, had any answering noise made known to him the neighborhood of his enemy, it would have been a consolation; but the utter silence only bewildered Carrol all the more, adding to his consternation and increasing his horror. His excited every other sense and feeling. He found himself now no longer in possession of that thirst for vengeance which had animated him. Revenge itself, a passion which is usually considered the strongest of all, fainted, and failed, and died out before this new and terrific feeling which had taken possession of him. His baffled and despised love, his wrongs, his insults, all the things which had fed his hate and nourished his revenge, were now swept away into oblivion. High over all these towered up that overmastering horror, to which the darkness and the Shadow of Death had given birth. Over his soul there came a pitiable sense of utter weakness, and in his heart there arose a wild, mad longing for escape, an impulse of flight, a feeling which urged him to seek some refuge from the danger unseen, the strongest and most selfish of all human instincts, — that of self-preservation. But in the midst of this, as his soul thus sank back within itself, and every ordinary passion died out, its terrified retreat was for a moment arrested. By a mighty effort Carrol summoned up all the pride of his manhood. He recalled his thoughts, dispelled his fears, and tried to sweep away the grim phantoms which had almost overpowered him.

For a time the horror passed. He regained some of his self-control and presence of mind. He looked forth into the dark more calmly. He wondered whether the experience of his enemy had been at all like his. He cursed himself for his weakness, and tried to fortify himself against a recurrence of anything of the sort.

He looked forward into the darkness. It was as intense as ever, and for the moment was less oppressive because he no longer was a prey to his excited fancy. During that moment he had time to think over his situation.

Where was his enemy? He could not tell. There was not a sound. He could not be near. Doubtless he was in the back room somewhere concealed, like himself, and like himself waiting

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of his own position, but perhaps his enemy misunderstood it, or perhaps he was waiting to make assurance doubly sure, so as not to throw away his shot and render himself defenceless. One thing was evident, and that was that his enemy must have the advantage over him. That enemy must have some idea of his position, but he himself had no idea whatever of the position of his enemy. He could not imagine in what part of the room he might be. He knew not from what quarter to expect an attack, or where to be on his guard. And how long was this to last?

Already he felt the time to be prolonged to an intolerable degree. Such had been his sufferings, that it seemed to be hours since the footsteps of the departing friends had died away in the night. It might have been only minutes, but if so, it showed him how it was possible for a whole night under these circumstances to lengthen itself out to an infinity. Such a prospect was black indeed. Could he endure it? The very thought was intolerable.

Although for the moment the horror had passed away, yet Carrol had now no confidence in himself, and no assurance against its return. Could he bear it? Or if he should meet it, and master it once more, how many times could he repeat the process in the course of the night? One more such experience was terrible; many more would be worse than death. Rather than carry on such a struggle, he would meet his enemy, and rush upon his weapon. Better instant death than an unlimited repetition of such shame and anguish. If his enemy were only less wary, there might be some chance, but as it was, that enemy lay concealed, crouching low, watchful, patient, and biding his time. And doubtless that enemy would lie concealed thus, with unremitting vigilance, until he could gain his desires. In comparison with such an enemy, Carrol felt himself to be weak indeed. How much longer could he be prepared or even resolved to maintain his patient watch until the dawn of day, when he might have the game in his own hands. But could he wait till then? He felt that he could not.

Even while meditating thus, Carrol began to feel the pressure of the old horror. It was once more returning. The hour and the occasion; the darkness and the Shadow of Death all once more became manifest. He struggled against his feelings; he sought to call up his courage, to fortify that courage by pride. The struggle within him became an agony. Over him descended the horror, while he fought with it, and tried by means of reason and manhood and pride, to arrest its descent. In the midst of this dread contest a sound arose. It came from the side of the room immediately opposite. It was a sound of trampling and crushing.

In an instant Carrol's mind had decided what it was and what he should do. At last the moment had come. The enemy had betrayed himself. He pulled the trigger of his outstretched pistol.

The report sounded like a peal of thunder in his sharpened and excited sense of hearing. There was a rush and a fall of something.

Then all was still.

Carrol started up, trembling from head to foot, while the sweat started in great drops to his brow. For a few moments he waited in vague expectation of an answering shot, with his brain reeling in anticipation of his doom. But the doom was delayed, and the response came not, and no lightning flash burst forth again into the darkness, and no thunderous report again broke the stillness of the night.

"Are you hit?" he cried, in a hoarse voice.

There was no reply.

"Du Potiron!" he cried again in a yet hoarser voice.

Still there was no reply.

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've killed him! He 's dead! I 'm a murderer. O my God!"

For a moment there arose a faint desire to go over to his victim, and examine him. But it was only for a moment. The next instant all desire, all thought of such a thing passed away.

For then, sudden, and sharp, and terrific, and unspeakable, there descended upon him the full power of the horror against which he had been struggling; bringing with it the abhorrent thought that the Dead was here, — the Dead, his own victim. And the thought was intolerable.

Chilled to the very marrow, and with that horror now supreme in his soul, Carrol dropped the pistol from his nerveless hand, and sprang to the door. He tore it down, he burst through into the hall and leaped forth out of the house. He fled like a madman, with a frightful feeling that his victim was following close behind.

Such was the horror that overwhelmed him, that for some time he fled blindly, not knowing in which direction he was going. Of one thing alone he was conscious, and that was the overmastering feeling that had taken possession of him; a hideous sense of being pursued, and a fear of being overtaken. The nightmare, Life-in-Death, which thickens man's blood with cold, had been revealed to him within that gloomy house, and it was from this that he fled, and it was this that pursued.

At last lights flashed about him. He was in broad streets, whose lamps extended on either side far away before him. The sight of these at once brought relief and dispelled his panic; and the long lines of twinkling lights, together with the commonplace figure of a policeman steadily pacing the sidewalk not far away, brought him down suddenly from the wild flight of morbid fancy to hard prosaic fact. He slackened his pace to a slow walk, and wandered onward, thinking over his situation.

alone remained; yet now this simple Fact that confronted him seemed not much less terrible than the wild Vision which had lately pursued him.

And the fact was simply this, he was a murderer!

Under these circumstances one course only remained for him, and that was instant and immediate flight.

VII.

A BAFFLED FLIGHT.

CARROL fled from Montreal in disguise, and concealed himself for some days in New York. Even here, however, he did not feel safe from the consequences of his crime, and so he resolved to fly to Europe. After some consideration, he decided to take the steamer to Havre, and go to Paris first. On the day for her departure he went on board at an early hour, and shut himself up in his state-room, waiting for the vessel to start. Here he remained for hours, listening to the noises around him, and peering stealthily through the glass to watch the movements on the wharf, while all the time he was tormented by an agonizing dread of arrest.

But the long-delayed moment of departure came at last. The lines were cast off, and the steamer, leaving the wharf, moved on down the harbor. Then Carrol ventured forth, and went up on deck.

Just as his foot touched the deck, he found himself face to face with a passenger who was on his way to the cabin. The passenger stopped short, and so did Carrol, and the two gazed at each other with unutterable surprise.

"Carrol! by Jingo!"

"Grimes! Good Lord!"

At such an utterly unexpected meeting, it is difficult to say which of these two felt the greater astonishment. The peculiar circumstances under which they had parted made a future meeting seem among the remotest of possibilities for many a long day. Grimes had

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possible acquaintances whom he might encounter, had never dreamed of this one. Yet this one was actually the only one whom thus far he had met; and he found him in the very place where he had not expected to meet any acquaintance at all. He had hoped that his parting from the shore would rid him of everything connected with the most terrible event of his life; yet here, the moment that he ventured to emerge from his hiding-place, he found himself confronted by the very man who was most closely connected with that event; not merely one who was acquainted with it, but its very prompter and instigator. Yet in Carrol's mind the meeting caused pleasure rather than pain. He had been alone so long, brooding in secret over his troubles, that the sight of one whom he could trust was inexpressibly soothing; and he wrung Grimes's big hand as he had never before wrung the hand of any man.

"Wal," cried Grimes, "of all the events that have ever occurred, this strikes me as about a little the darn'd-est that I can think of; I declare, if it ain't the cur'ousest coincidence — !"

And Grimes paused, fairly overwhelmed.

"I took this steamer," said Carrol, hurriedly, "because it happened to be the first one that was leaving."

"Wal, for that matter, so did I; but who'd have thought of you goin' to Europe?"

Carrol's face, which for a moment had lighted up with a flush of pleasing excitement, now grew dark again, and the sombre cloud that had hung over it ever since that night of horror once more overspread it.

"I've come," said he, with some hesitation, "because Europe — seemed to me the — the best place that I could go to."

"Wal, so did I," said Grimes; "especially France. That's the country for me. I've thought all the world over, and decided on that one spot."

"Why, the very mornin' after I left you."

"The morning after? Why, I left then."

"You did? What train?"

"The first one."

"Why, that's the very train I travelled in."

"Was it?" asked Carrol, drearily.

"Yes, it was, and I can't understand why I did n't see you."

"Very strange," said Carrol, in a low voice, raising at the same time his white face, and glancing furtively around.

"Wal, it's darned queer, too," said Grimes; "and I've been in York ever since. Have you?"

"Well — yes — that is — I've had some — some business — you know," said Carrol, in a confused way.

There was something in Carrol's manner that struck Grimes. Thus far he had been too much occupied with the surprise of this unexpected meeting; but now that the first surprise was over, he was open to other feelings; and the first feeling that came to him was simply a repetition of the former emotion of surprise, suggested, however, by a different cause. His attention was now arrested by the change in the tone, manner, and appearance of Carrol; and he looked at him earnestly, searchingly, and wonderingly. He saw a face of extreme paleness, which already bore marks of emaciation and of suffering. His hair, as it straggled from beneath his hat, did not seem to have been brushed; his mustache was loose and ragged; there was a certain furtive watchfulness in his eyes, and a haunted look in his face, that gave to him an appearance totally different from that which had characterized him in the old easy days of yore. All this was taken in by Grimes at one glance.

The result of this one glance was very marked in Grimes himself. A change came over him in an instant, which was as marked in its way as the

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ciance, and the careless *bonhommie* of his face were succeeded by an expression of deep concern, of anxiety, of something, in fact, that looked like self-reproach, and seemed to verge upon that remorse which was stamped upon the face of his friend. His teeth compressed themselves, he frowned, and the trouble of his soul could not be concealed.

"What 's the matter?" asked Carrol. "Why do you look so?"

"Why, man, it 's *you* that looks so, as you say. What 's the matter with *you?*" said Grimes, in a hesitating voice. "You look as if you 'd seen a ghost."

Carrol shuddered.

"What has happened?" asked Grimes, anxiously. "How did it end? Is this what sent you away?"

Carrol looked wildly around, and then said in a hurried voice, "Hush! Come away from here. Come down to my state-room. I 'll tell you all about it."

A terrible secret borne in one's own heart will always bear down that heart by its weight; and it was this that Carrol had endured. The meeting with his old friend had been instinctively welcomed; and now that he had him alone, he availed himself eagerly of that precious and soothing relief which is always found when the dread secret can be revealed safely to one who is trusted. And so, in the seclusion of his state-room, he told Grimes his story, omitting those unnecessary particulars about his own superstitious fancies, and confining himself simply to what he considered the facts of the case.

To all this sad confession Grimes listened with a strange and a disturbed countenance. There was in his face true sympathy and profound compassion; but there was something more. There was perplexity and bewilderment. Evidently there was something in the story which he did not comprehend, and could not. He felt puzzled, and interrupted him with frequent questions.

"Do you mean to say," he asked, as Carrol ended, "that you really believe you killed him?"

"Have n't I told you that?" groaned Carrol.

"But — but — is n't there some darned mistake about it all?" asked Grimes.

"Mistake! O heavens! What would n't I give if I could only hope that there might have been! But that is impossible. O no! There is always ringing in my ears that horrible rushing sound of his fall."

"But it may have been something else."

"Something else!" repeated Carrol, in a despairing tone. "O no; my senses could not have deceived me!"

"Now, look here," cried Grimes, with a certain sort of feverish impatience, "did you *see* him?"

"See him? What nonsense! How could I?"

"The flash of the pistol would show him."

"Flash of the pistol! I tell you my brain was full of a thousand images, and every one of them represented him."

"Had you been drinking much that day?" asked Grimes, after a thoughtful pause.

"Yes; of course. You might have supposed that."

"Very much?"

"Yes."

Grimes paused again.

"Did n't you go over," he asked, "to find out whether it was him or not; to assure yourself of the fact, you know? Did n't you touch him?"

"Touch him!" cried Carrol, in a voice of horror. "What! *Touch him!* Good heavens!"

"Wal," said Grimes, "you really don't know this."

"As sure as there is a heaven above us, I *do* know it," said Carrol.

Grimes said no more. He leaned

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hands. Carrol reclined back against the wall of the state-room, and gave himself up to the terrible memories which had been once more aroused by his narration. At last he gave a heavy sigh, and started to his feet.

"Come," he said, "I can't stand this. Let 's go out. I 'm suffocating. Come out on deck. I must have some fresh air. Come."

Grimes rose to his feet without a word, and followed Carrol as he led the way. On his face there was the same expression of anxiety and bewilderment which has already been mentioned. In this mood he followed Carrol to the upper deck.

"Come," said Carrol, "let 's go aft. There are fewer people there, and we'll be more by ourselves."

He led the way aft, and Grimes followed.

As they approached the stern, they saw two ladies sitting there whose backs were turned towards them. The ladies were gazing in silence at the receding shores, and Carrol drew Grimes to a place on the side of the steamer which was about a dozen yards away. Standing there, the two friends instinctively turned their eyes toward the land behind them, and looked at it in an abstracted way; for each one was so absorbed by his own thoughts, that his gaze was fixed rather upon vacancy than upon any definite object.

At length, one of the ladies said something to the other, after which they both rose, and turned as if with the intention of leaving the place. As they turned, their eyes wandered about and finally rested for an instant upon Grimes and his companion.

It was only for an instant that their glance fell upon these two men, but that instant was enough to allow of a profound sensation. The deep rich complexion of one of the ladies grew deeper and richer, as a flush passed over all her beautiful face; while at the same time that beautiful face assumed an expression of astonishment, embarrassment, and almost dismay, its former air of good-natured content. For a moment she hesitated in her confusion, and then bowed. The other lady showed equal feeling, but of a totally different kind. Her face was very pale and very sad; and as she saw the two friends, a flush passed over it, which was followed by a mournful, earnest look of mute inquiry and wonder.

Grimes looked amazed, but took off his hat and bowed; after which he hesitated, and seemed on the point of approaching the ladies. But he looked around for a moment to see Carrol. Carrol, on his part, had seen the ladies, and certainly his amazement was fully equal to that which was felt by any of the others. Already he had experienced one surprise at meeting with Grimes. This meeting was a much greater shock, for he had not the faintest idea that Mrs. Lovell and Miss Heathcote had contemplated leaving Montreal. But the sight of Miss Heathcote's face, after the first surprise, only served to deepen the darkness that had closed around his soul. For a moment he regarded her with a hard, cold stare of wonder; and then, without a word, without a sign, he turned abruptly and walked away. As Grimes looked around after his friend, he saw him thus walking off; for a moment he hesitated, and then, with another bow to the ladies, he walked off after him.

VIII.

AT HIS MERCY.

Mrs. Lovell and her sister stood for some moments in silence, with their eyes fixed upon the retreating figures of these two men, and varying feelings animated them at this sudden and unexpected meeting. Mrs. Lovell at length flung herself impatiently into a seat and patted the deck with her little foot; while Maud stood like a statue, erect, rigid, with every trace of color gone from her face.

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Maud did not seem to hear her, for she made no reply.

Mrs. Lovell repeated the question.

"No," said Maud, abruptly.

Mrs. Lovell heaved a deep sigh.

"I 'm sure," said she, "I 'll never get over this; but, at any rate, we may as well carry out our intention of going below. We 're safer there, you know, Maudie. And who 'd have thought it! Who *would* have thought it! O dear! of all the strange and unfortunate coincidences! O dear me, Maudie dearest, what *shall* I do!"

To this appeal, which was uttered in quite a heart-rending tone, Maud made no reply. Indeed, she did not seem to have heard it. She stood as statuesque as before, with her face turned toward the retreating form of Carrol. She watched him till he was out of sight, and even after he was lost to her view she stood looking in that direction.

"Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell, at last, in as impatient a tone as was possible for her to use.

Maud sighed.

"Well," said she, turning around, and looking at her sister in an absent way.

"O Maudie darling, what in the world *am* I *ever* to *do!*" said Mrs. Lovell, mournfully.

"I suppose," said Maud, in a deliberate voice, "we may as well go below, as we first proposed."

"You are so awfully cold and unsympathetic," said Mrs. Lovell, in a reproachful tone.

Maud said nothing.

Mrs. Lovell, thereupon, rose to her feet, and stood for a moment looking forward along the line of retreat of Grimes and Carrol, with an expression of refined and ladylike despair that was uncommonly becoming to her.

"Well," said she, with a sigh, "I see no signs of them now; I dare say they will have the good taste to keep out of the way for the present; and so, Maudie, I think we had better go below at once."

sought the seclusion of their stateroom, which they reached without again encountering the two gentlemen.

Here a long silence followed, which was at length broken by Mrs. Lovell.

"O dear!" she said, with a little sigh. "He has tracked me after all, and how he *ever* managed to do it is more than I can tell, I 'm sure. And the worst of it is, it was the very thing I was afraid of. You remember, Maudie dear, I proposed at first to take a Cunard steamer to Liverpool. And you remember that I changed my mind and took this one. You know I told you that I changed my mind because I preferred going to France direct. Well, you know, Maudie darling, it was nothing of the kind. That was n't my reason at all, you know."

"What was it?" asked Maud.

"Why, you know, I really was quite frightened at the idea that Mr. Grimes might manage to find out how I had gone. I felt sure that he would follow me. He 's one of those dreadful men of one idea, you know; and I know that I 'm the only idea he has in his poor old head. Well, I was so dreadfully frightened at the idea of his following me, that I changed my plans and took this steamer. I thought it was a very lucky thing, and I felt quite sure, you know, that he would n't find me at all. If he attempted to follow me he would be carried to Liverpool, and I would go to Havre, and I knew that he could never track me from one place to the other. He would have to go all the way back to America, you know, before he could gain the slightest clew to my proceedings; and even then it would have been very, very hard. But, O dear! how foolishly sanguine I was! I come here. I embark. I am just leaving the shore, and thinking with a kind of pity about the poor fellow, — who really has no end of claims to my esteem, — when suddenly I turn round, and as I live! there he is, standing just before me. I declare to you, Maudie darling, it was a perfect wonder that I

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my heart never beat so fast in all my life. Did n't I look dreadfully discomposed, Maudie dear?"

"O no, I think not," said Maud, absently.

"Well, I really felt so, you know, — as embarrassed as possible; quite like some raw school-girl, detected in some fault, you know. And now — O dear! what *am* I *ever* to do! what *am* I *ever* to *do!* I 'm sure, it 's really quite cruel in you, Maudie dear, to be so very, very indifferent. You are far, far too self-absorbed."

To this Maud made no answer.

"The worst of it is," continued Mrs. Lovell, "we are out at sea, positively on the ocean itself. If we were only at the wharf, I would go ashore at once, and leave all my luggage behind, — I positively would. Now, would n't you, Maudie, if you were in my place? Would n't you, now? Say."

"Yes," said Maud, dreamily.

"But no; there 's nothing so good as that. Here I am, positively at his mercy. Did you notice, Maudie dearest, how very, very triumphant he looked?"

"No."

"Well, he did then; and very, very unpleasantly so, indeed. It 's bad enough, I 'm sure, for one to have power over one, but to go and assert it in such a particularly open way is really cruel. It really reminds me of those lines of poetry that some one made, that it was something or other to have a giant's strength, but very, very naughty to use it like a giant. I dare say you remember the lines, Maudie.

"But I know another reason," said Mrs. Lovell, after a thoughtful pause, — "another reason why he looked so triumphant. He 's got that dreadful chignon with him. I saw it in his face. It was just as if he had said so to me in so many words. And how dreadful it is, Maudie, for a discarded lover to be carrying about a lock of his lady's hair. It 's really awful, you know."

"But it is n't exactly a lock of your own hair."

"Well, it 's as much mine as most people's, you know. Really, one hardly knows what really is a lady's hair now, and so it 's all the same; but I do wish, Maudie, that it was n't so very much. It 's a whole head, Maudie dear. And only to think of his having it now in his trunk, or his valise, or his carpet-bag. But I dare say he has a casket made on purpose to keep it in. Really, Maudie dear, do you know, it makes me feel quite agitated when I think of it. It 's so very improper. And I could n't help it. I really had to give it to him. And it makes me feel as though it gave him some sort of a claim on me."

"I 'm sure, your fears seem quite unnecessary to me," said Maud. "You can do as you please."

"O, it 's all very well to talk that way, Maudie; but then, you know, he has such a strange power over me, that I 'm afraid of having him near me, and I know that I shall be in a state of constant terror all this voyage. Of course, he 'll bother me all the time; and I 'll have to be always planning to keep out of his way. And how *can* I do that? I must shut myself up here, a prisoner; and what good will that do? Besides, I can't make a prisoner of myself in that way; I really can't. I *must* go about on deck, and so I shall constantly fall in his way. And I can't help it. Only, Maudie dear, you must always, always be with me. You must never, never let me be alone."

"O, we shall be always together," said Maud. "As to staying below, that is absurd."

"Well, really to me," continued Mrs. Lovell, "there is something perfectly appalling in this man's mysterious knowledge of my movements. Think how he tracked me all through Canada to Montreal. That was wonderful enough, but it was nothing to this. For you see I tried as hard as I could to baffle him completely. I really cannot think of one single trace that I could have left. My friends all think that I

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I myself did not really know that I was going in this one till yesterday, and I did not take my passage till the last moment. Really, Maudie, it frightens me. I 'll tell you what I think, — I think he must have agents."

"Agents?"

"Yes, agents. I don't know what agents are, but I know they 're something dreadful, something like spies or detectives; only they are in private employ, you know. And he must have quite an army of them. And only think of an army of those terrible agents watching all my movements, spying my actions, listening to my words, and reporting everything to him. It 's awful."

"Well, really now, Georgie," said Maud, "you are going too far, you know. He could easily have found out this by himself."

"I 'm sure I don't see how he could."

"Why, he could easily have gone about and seen the lists of passengers on each boat, before starting. I dare say he heard in Montreal that you were going to Europe, and so he has watched the principal steamers; and as he found your name on the passenger-list of this one, he sailed in it himself."

"Well, then, all I can say is, I think it is really very, very rude in him. I thought he had such delicacy, you know, and such a fine sense of honor, — really exquisite, you know. He seemed to be so very delicate in his sense of propriety and honor and all that, — on one occasion, — when he might have — might have acted so very much more for his own interest, by being a little less punctilious, you know. And I really don't know how to harmonize such delicate conduct on one occasion with the very inconsiderate and really alarming behavior of this."

"I think, perhaps, you have given him credit for what did not belong to him," said Maud. "What you considered a delicate sense of honor may bluntness of perception, or honesty, or something of that sort, you know."

"O, well, it would n't interfere with my esteem for him, you know. I would n't lay very *great* stress upon a very fine sense of honor; that is, I mean, I don't think that it is necessary for a man to form his conduct toward ladies after the fashion of Sir Charles Grandison. And do you know, Maudie darling, I really don't know but that I should rather prefer having him just a little dishonorable. I really think it 's rather nice, you know."

"Nice!" exclaimed Maud, in a strange tone.

"Well, at any rate, they are all so," said Mrs. Lovell. "The men, I mean. What they are chiefly wanting in is that peculiar sense of honor for which we women are distinguished. Men never form strong and intimate friendships like women. They never can thoroughly trust one another. They never defend the weak of their own sex. They can never keep one another's secrets. They take a spiteful and malicious pleasure in tearing one another's reputations to pieces, and in displaying their weakness to the world. Petty spite, small scandal, and ungenerous and censorious observation of one another are almost universal among them. They are terribly inclined to jealousy, and are fearfully exigent. O, I assure you, I have always had a very, very low opinion of men! When I was a little girl, my governess gave me a proof-book. Each page was headed with a statement about the nature of man. The first page was headed, "Man is corrupt"; the second, "Man is sinful"; the third, "Man is a child of wrath"; the fourth, "Man is weak"; the fifth, "Man is desperately wicked"; and many more. Now, you know, Maudie, I had to find texts from the Bible to prove all these; and I found no end of them, and I filled the book; and really, when I had finished, the impression that was left on my mind about man, Maudie dar-

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ing, and that it was a great pity that he was ever created. And I don't want ever, ever to be married again. And I 'm dreadfully uneasy; for, you see, Mr. Grimes is so awfully determined, and so fearfully persevering, and I 'm so wretchedly weak, that really I almost feel as though I am lost. And now, here he is, and what *am* I to do? You must stay with me always, always, you know, Maudie dear; and not leave me alone for even so much as five minutes."

"O well, Georgie, you know, I am always with you, and I 'm sure you need never be alone, unless you run off by yourself."

"Yes, but that 's the very thing I mean. You must never let me run off by myself. I can't trust myself. I have no end of foolish impulses; and you see Mr. Grimes has me here quite in his own power. Here he is, with his great face and beard and voice, and his great, big eyes, carrying my chignon with him; and I know exactly what he 's going to do. He 'll put himself where I can see him, and pretend not to annoy me, and then he 'll look so pathetic that he 'll make me awfully sorry for him; and then, you know, I 'm so good-natured, and I 'll feel so sorry for him, that I 'll manage to draw him to me; and then he 'll begin a system of silent adoration that will be simply intolerable. I can't bear to be adored, Maudie dear."

"I 'm sure, Georgie," said Maud, with a weary sigh, "I 'll do all that I can. I think you are really giving yourself a great deal of unnecessary trouble. I 'll always be with you, unless you choose to run away."

"Yes, but, Maudie dear, you must watch me, and follow me up, for, you know, you would n't like to lose me, — now, would you, Maudie? and I 'm the best sister you have and the most loving. To be sure, you have no other sister; but then, you know, I mean, even if you had twenty sisters, none of them could love you as I do. Now could they, Maudie? But, my poor you?"

And Mrs. Lovell, whose protestation of affection had caused her to turn her thoughts more particularly to her sister, now noticed something about her which shocked her. She was excessively pale, and there was a suffering visible in her face which was more striking than the ordinary expression of mere dejection which had characterized her recently. In an instant all Mrs. Lovell's fears for herself fled away in deep anxiety about her sister.

"You poor darling!" she cried. "How foolish I have been! I have n't thought of you. And I might have known. Really, Maudie, I did n't think of Mr. Carrol being here too. But how very, very odd! And how cruel it is too! What in the world could have made *him* come! With him it is different; he has treated you most shockingly, and has shown no desire to make amends. Why should he follow you?"

"I 'm sure I don't know," said Maud, with a dreary sigh.

"He 's a heartless, cruel, miserable, man," cried Mrs. Lovell, vehemently. "Just at the very moment when you might hope for change of scene and all that to distract your thoughts, *he* comes forcing himself upon your notice, to show you how indifferent he is. The wretch! O Maudie, never, never can I forgive him for the grief he has caused you. Of course this is all his mean and ungentlemanly spite."

Maud was silent.

"After you had stooped so low too, Maudie. You actually descended to an explanation, and he did n't deign to answer it. He could n't forgive the offence to his dignity, even after he must have seen that the offence was never really committed. Or perhaps he knew he had done you a deep wrong, and was too proud to acknowledge it. Of course that was it, unless, indeed, he may have repented of his proposal altogether, and chose this way of getting out of it. But what makes him follow us? In any case it seems a strange course. Nothing but

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know, Maudie, that is the way with men. O, it is, I assure you! They are very much influenced by all the smaller passions, such as jealousy, envy, malice, and miserable spite. Nearly all men are more or less spiteful; and it is this feeling of spite that has brought him here. But, Maudie dear, will you really allow yourself to be made unhappy by such an unworthy creature? Can't you fall back upon your pride, and look at him with that utter indifference which he deserves? O dear, Maudie, how I wish I could give you a little of my strength of character!"

Maud said nothing for some time, and when at last she did speak it was in a low monotone, which sounded rather as if she were uttering her thoughts aloud, than as if she were addressing a remark to her sister.

"Yes, he must have received my letter. He must know now exactly how it happened. I expected that he would have come at once to me. But he would n't; and I waited for days that seemed ages. He was offended perhaps because even a mistake had arisen, and his pride could not bend so far as to come to a reconciliation. He has thought of me ever since with the resentful and angry feeling that he expressed in his last letter. Having written that, he could not retract it. It seemed to him as though he might be confessing that he had been in a wrong. He has chosen rather to let the error remain, and for the sake of a foolish and frantic self-conceit, to sacrifice me. It was that which I saw in his face to-day. Why he has followed me I can't imagine, unless he has been prompted by that same self-conceit which now leads him to show himself to me, so that I may see how indifferent he is to me. No doubt he wants me to feel that he is ashamed of the love that he once professed. He has evidently followed me with a purpose, and it could not possibly have been an accident, for he came deliberately to show himself almost as soon as we had left the wharf. He put he fixed upon me that cold, cruel stare, the remembrance of which haunts me even now. But O, Georgie! did n't you see how fearfully he has changed? How pale, how awfully pale he is!"

"Is he?" said Mrs. Lovell, in an indifferent tone. "Well, really, I scarce noticed him at all. I was too confused, you know."

"Well," said Maud, after another long silence, "I am not one of those who can be meek under open insult and contempt. He shall find that the scorn which he is so eager to show can be met by equal scorn from me. He shall see no weakness in me. I will show him that life has other things for me of far more value than a silly sentiment."

"O Maudie! my dear darling!" burst forth Mrs. Lovell, enthusiastically. "How I love to hear you talk so! That 's right; be a grand, great, bold, brave, wise woman. Do you know, darling, that is my highest ideal of humanity? And only to think of *you* being all that! I 'm sure *I* try hard," she continued in a plaintive voice, — "I try hard to be that myself, but I 'm sometimes a little afraid that I don't succeed so well as I wish to. But I intend now to begin again; let 's both of us begin, Maudie; let 's be both of us great and grand and bold and brave and wise. Will you, Maudie dearest? Say yes, darling."

"I don't know, I 'm sure," said Maud, absently. "I 'll do whatever you wish, Georgie, of course."

"And so you do, you precious; and so we 'll both of us make our lives sublime. For my part, I despise men more than ever," continued Mrs. Lovell, suddenly darting aside from the idea with which she started, and reverting to her favorite topic; "but then if they are false and fickle and weak, why, we should remember that it is the common failing of their sex, should n't we, Maudie dear? But, Maudie, do you intend to avoid him?"

"Avoid him?" asked Maud.

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seeing him?"

"There is no danger," said Maud, "but that I shall always have pride enough to sustain me against the open scorn of any one. He shall not find me trying to avoid him; I shall let him see that he cannot persecute me, for the simple reason that I will not allow myself to be persecuted. And he shall find that his presence in this boat will not make me vary one hair's breadth from my usual course."

IX.

AN APPARITION.

WHEN Carrol turned away at that unexpected meeting with Miss Heathcote, he was quite overwhelmed with the new emotion that it called up within him, and had the most indefinite idea in the world of what he was to do. He wandered, therefore, in a blind, vague sort of a way, until he found himself in his state-room. Grimes, too, who was equally confused, indulged in an equally vague course of wandering, and instinctively following his friend, he entered the same enclosure, and then, shutting the door, the two sat in silence, looking at one another.

"Wal," said Grimes, at length, "ain't this rich! Of all the darn'dest! Only to think of everybody tumbling in here together in this here boat, and at the very beginnin' of the voyage, too! It does beat all creation!"

"I don't understand it all," said Carrol, moodily. "How the Devil did *she* get here, of all places? When did they leave? What did they leave for? Where are they going?"

"You need n't ask any more questions of that sort," said Grimes, "I give it up at the outset. I 'm nowhar. Don't direct any of your observations to me."

And Grimes began to rub his shingled hair in a most violent manner, and then a long silence followed.

"I see how it is," said Carrol, at length. "It 's beginning to be intelligible. She has contrived that she and I should find ourselves in the same boat. But I see how it is. She has heard about — about *that affair*, and has got a bad fright. She is in deep affliction. She looked sad enough, by heaven! and had enough sorrow in her face to suffice for a dozen Frenchmen; she 's mourning over her vanished coronet. This great calamity has spoiled her game. She finds that her comedy has become a tragedy. It 's the town talk; she has fled from people's tongues. Aha! what a fright she must have had when she saw me! Perhaps she will inform on me; I should like that; I should have *her* hauled up as chief witness; but there 's no danger of that; she would n't dare to do it. O no, she 'll pray for my escape from a trial, out of consideration for her precious self! By heaven! she 'll begin by this time to learn that she made a slight mistake when she first undertook to make a decoy duck of *me!*"

"See here, my son," said Grimes, "listen to me for a moment. I don't like this. I acknowledge that you 've had a hard row to hoe, but at the same time I swear I won't set here and hear you abuse a young woman in that infernal fashion. What 's the use of bein' a live man if one 's goin' to talk like a darned jackass? Now I dare say she 's not acted altogether on the square; but at the same time that does n't give you any right to use such language as you do. I don't believe anythin' of the sort. I judge her by her face, and I say that a woman with a face like hers can't be the infernal fiend that you make out. She can't do it, nohow. Besides, even if she was, she 's a woman, and for that very reason she had ought to be sacred from abuse and slander and defamation. My idee is that women as a general thing have a precious hard time of it on this planet, and if one of them doos n't happen to turn out just as we like, we had n't ought to pitch into her in that red-hot style. And finally, let me impress upon you the fact, which has been made

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bein' that has given himself up to iniquity and meanness and baseness can ever have such a face as the face that belongs to that young woman. It can't be done, nohow."

During these remarks Carrol stared gloomily at Grimes, but the latter took no notice of him. Grimes himself had on his broad honest face a gloom but little inferior to that of Carrol. There was once more visible in his expression that bewilderment and perplexity which had shown itself before on listening to Carrol's story. The encounter with the ladies had evidently created a new puzzle which had joined itself to the former one, and complicated it. So he sat in silence, involved in his own thoughts, and struggling to emerge from his bewilderment.

Carrol meanwhile sat with his head buried in his hands. At last he raised it, and said as if to himself, "What are they doing here? How did they happen to come on this boat?"

Grimes started up.

"Wal," said he, "that's easy answered. In the first place, they have as much right here as you or me. In the second place, I beg leave to call your attention to the fact that this is a free country. Women have a hard time of it as a general thing, but after all they have certain inalienable rights, among which may be mentioned as self-evident truths their natural right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the privilege of travellin' wherever they darn please, so long as they 're able to pay their way."

"It 's hard to have them here. It 's damned hard," said Carrol.

"O, you need n't blame her. 'T ain't likely she did it on purpose."

"I should hope not."

"Depend upon it, she would n't have come by this boat if she 'd 'a' known you were on board."

"No, I don't see how she could wish to be so close to me."

"She came because this boat was the first and directest, and because her son, don't be alarmed. The boat 's large enough for you two. You can avoid her. Go forward when you are on deck, and let her stay astern. And at the same time, let me advise you to try and get out of that infernal habit of vilifying her. For my part, I think there 's a mistake somewhere or somehow, and so I never believe half of what you say on that subject. Your suspicions are false somehow, I do believe. Why, man, that face of hers is enough for me; I believe in faces, I do; and I tell you what, if ever there was nobility of nature stamped upon any face, it 's on hers. How is it possible that any one with such a face can be what you say?"

"O, damn it, man!" burst forth Carrol, "don't talk to me about her face. Don't I know it better than you do? Don't I know every feature by heart? Won't I always have to remember it? Have n't I thought all the time of the horrible contrast between her face and her nature? I tell you, it was her face that lured me to destruction. Destruction? Yes; and mind you, when I say that word I mean it. Look at me. Have you forgotten what I told you a short time ago? Let me tell you now, what I owe to that face of hers, which you think so noble. I 'll speak of her for the last time, and promise never to mention her again."

Carrol drew a long breath. His agitation was excessive. He spoke quick and short. His face was white, and his lips bloodless, while his gestures, which were formerly few and far between, were now vehement and frequent.

"First of all," he continued, "she encouraged me, and led me on, — she led me on," he repeated savagely, "till I was too far gone to haul off easily, and then picked up that Frenchman. She encouraged him too, and secretly. She fought *me* off judiciously, so as not to lose me, and at the same time she stealthily cultivated *him*. She used *me* as her infernal decoy to work upon *him*. She played with my

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my life for no other reason than her own insatiable but silly vanity. At last I proposed. She rejected me, but accepted the other. You know the result. I need n't go over that again."

Carrol paused, in terrible excitement; his breathing was quick and spasmodic; and his set brows and clenched hands showed the intensity of his feeling.

"Here am I," he exclaimed. "Look at me now. Look at me. What am I? Think of my position a few days ago, and then think of me now. What am I? What?" he repeated. "Why this, — I 'm an outlaw, — a fugitive, — hunted down, — forced to fly, — an exile forevermore, — my life forfeited. Life is for me only a curse. Death is welcome. What am I?" he continued. "I 'm a murderer!" he answered, in a low, thrilling voice. "That 's what I am. I bear on my brow the mark of Cain. A murderer! A murderer! Abhorred of man, and accursed of God!"

He stopped, overwhelmed by his agitated feelings, and again buried his face in his hands.

To all this Grimes had no answer to make. In fact, as he sat there, erect and rigid, with his eyes fixed upon the bowed form of his friend, there seemed in him some portion of that emotion which convulsed the other. His old look of bewilderment came over his face, and with it there came an expression of trouble, and grief, and deep concern, and self-reproach. He did not utter one single word.

At last Carrol started up.

"I can't stand this," he exclaimed, "I feel half suffocated. I must go on deck."

With these words he opened the door and went out. Grimes did not follow him, but sat there, motionless and thoughtful. He only moved once to shut the door, and then, resuming his former position, he gave himself up to his perplexed thoughts.

When the steamer left the wharf it was midday, but hours had passed around extended the broad surface of the ocean, over which the steamer forced her way, urged on by the mighty engines whose dull rumble sounded from below. Carrol reached the deck, and stood for some minutes looking around. Overhead was the clear sky; all around was the dark water. The sun had set, and the shadows of night were descending, but objects were still discernible.

Carrol looked around, and then strolled slowly forward about half the length of the vessel. There he stopped and sat down, and gave himself up to his gloomy thoughts.

His sudden meeting with Grimes had been a relief to the strain of his feelings, and even the excitement of seeing Miss Heathcote had only served to distract his mind from the one dark subject on which it incessantly brooded. But now the relief and the distraction had passed, and the old inevitable remorse returned, and with the remorse came the harrowing fear of retribution; such feelings as these now filled his soul as he sat here, and withdrew his attention from the scene around. The darkness which was descending over that scene was analogous to the darkness that was overshadowing his mind.

Bitter indeed were his thoughts, and dark and sad and despairing. This, then, was the possibility of life, that the folly of a moment could blight it all, a short instant of self-forgetfulness, and then came inexorable Fate, dragging him down to crime and remorse and ruin and despair. For him there was absolutely no remedy. No sorrow, no repentance, could now avail. The deed was done. The inevitable consequences must be his. The wages of sin are death, and so, it seemed, are the consequences even of folly.

From these meditations he sought refuge in that which was now his chief resort from the gloom of his soul, — his brandy-flask. As he unscrewed the stopper he thought grimly of a saying which he had once heard from Grimes.

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turns out sad. You see most people after murder take to drink; and they do, as a general thing, drink *hard*, and turn out poor cusses. Therefore I would n't advise anybody to commit murder if he can help it."

The flask was slowly uncorked. Holding the stopper in his right hand, Carrol raised the flask in his left. At the same moment he raised his head, and his mouth was already parted to receive the approaching liquor, when suddenly in the very crisis of this act his attention was arrested by a figure that stood on the opposite side of the ship, directly facing him.

He was sitting about a half-dozen yards aft the funnel. Behind the funnel a lamp was suspended, whose light shone down through the gloom. It shone upon Carrol, and it shone also upon the figure which had arrested his attention at that critical moment.

Human experience has taught us that there is many a slip between the cup and the lip; and human experience also teaches us that when a slip takes place under such circumstances, it is the result of something serious. Now, when the cup is of such a nature as this of Carrol's, and when the lip belongs to a man who is filled with a desperate craving for this cup, as the only solace to his despair, why, then, it stands to reason that the union of the two can only be prevented by something of the most astonishing kind.

It was evident that Carrol saw in this figure something that was sufficiently astonishing to arrest the progress of his hand.

The figure stood there, indistinct in the gloom; but the light from the lantern shone upon its face, leaving the rest of it less visible. On its head was a very commonplace felt hat; but the face that was revealed beneath it was not at all commonplace. It was a very pale face; it had a short beard and a mustache; and the eyes were wide and staring, and fixed on Carrol. To Carrol there seemed a horrible meaning in fixed gaze; something not of this earth, something that was the natural result of his crime. In an instant there flashed through his mind the memory of that Night of Horror, in the old house, face to face with his enemy; again the agony was renewed, his senses again were maddened by that dread scene; once more there resounded the thunder of the exploding pistol, followed by that abhorrent noise of the fall of the victim. The renewal of that horror unnerved him. The flask fell from his hand. He started to his feet, and staggered forward toward the figure, under the influence of a terrible fascination.

X.

THE HAUNTED MIND.

Carrol rushed forward toward the figure, under the influence of a terrible fascination. The Horror, which had oppressed him once before on that memorable night, now seemed to renew its power over him. He obeyed mechanically a blind impulse, the creature of that Horror, and sprung toward the figure that thus showed itself, without any well-defined thought or motive whatever. He had scarcely taken two or three steps, however, when his foot struck against an iron rod, that ran across the vessel about two inches above the deck. He stumbled, and fell heavily downward, and the force with which he struck was so great that he lay motionless for about half a minute.

At length he gathered himself up, slowly and painfully, and scrambled to his feet. The fascination of that figure's basilisk glance was still strong enough to influence his movements; and he glanced fearfully toward the place where it had stood.

It was no longer visible.

He looked all around with a shudder, expecting to see it in some new position; but nothing of the sort met his view. Then he drew a long breath, and without stopping to pick up his flask,

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was singular enough to have excited attention in any other place than the saloon of an ocean steamer. His face was fearfully pale, his jaw was hanging down, his eyes fixed and glaring, and he walked with staggering steps. But at sea such beings as these are constantly visible at all times, and poor humanity takes on even worse forms than this as the ocean asserts its mastery over man. So the wild appearance of Carrol excited but little attention, except on the part of Grimes, who happened to be in the saloon as Carrol entered. He was still troubled in his mind by the thoughts that had arisen from Carrol's story; and now that he entered in such a way, he could not help imagining that some new event had occurred in connection with his friend's troubles. So he at once rose, and, following Carrol, came up to him just as he was entering his state-room.

"What's up?" asked Grimes, as he stood in the doorway.

Carrol said nothing, but flung himself on a seat, and buried his head in his hands.

"Shall I light the lamp?"

Carrol made no reply.

Upon this Grimes acted on the principle that silence gives consent, and, entering the state-room, he lighted the lamp, and then closing the door he sat down and looked earnestly at his friend.

"Come, my boy," said Grimes at last, in a voice full of kindly sympathy, "you're overdoin' it a little. Don't go on in this style. Somethin' new has happened. What is it?"

Carrol gave a heavy sigh, but said nothing.

"It's somethin' more 'n sea-sickness anyway," said Grimes, in a tone of deep conviction. "If it had been any other chap, I'd say it was sea-sickness, but I know you're not given that way. Come now. Out with it. If there's anythin' new turned up, it won't do any good to keep it to yourself. So out with it."

Upon this Carrol made a nearer approach to speaking, for he gave a groan. Grimes.

Carrol raised his head and drew a long breath.

"Grimes," said he.

"Well, my son."

"I've seen him."

"What's that? You've what?"

"I've seen him," repeated Carrol, in a hollow, sepulchral voice.

"You've seen him! — seen him! Seen who? Who's him?"

"There's only One," said Carrol, solemnly, "that I could mean, — only One, — the One that haunts me always, the One who fell beneath my hand."

"What! that infernal frog-eatin' Frenchman?" said Grimes, contemptuously. "O, come now, that's all infernal rubbish."

"I've seen him," moaned Carrol, going on in a way that sounded like the monotonous croon of an Irish lady at a wake, — "I've seen him."

"Well then," said Grimes, "all that I can say is, that I'll be darned if I can understand why the sight of a miserable frog-eatin' Frenchman should produce such an effect upon any one who calls himself a man. Come now, Carrol, shake yourself. Be a man."

"I saw him," said Carrol, once more taking up the burden of his song, — "I saw him. There was no mistake. It was by the smoke-stack."

"By the smoke-stack?"

"Yes, just now, by the smoke-stack. I saw him. It was he. There was no mistake. I could not be mistaken in that death-pale face, — the face of a corpse, — in the terrible glare of those glassy eyes —"

"It's evident," said Grimes, after a brief observation of the state of his friend, — "it's evident that something has become visible to you, and it's also evident that you've been considerably agitated."

Carrol said nothing, but sat with his eyes fixed upon the floor, and his brows contracted into a frown.

"My idee," said Grimes, after another thoughtful pause, — "my idee is this, you've been drinkin' altogether

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prolonged tipple; never could five minutes pass without a pull at your flask; and a man that 's got to that has simply reached a point where he is liable to be visited by all the devils in Pandemonium. If you 've been goin' on at this rate since you left your home, all I can say is, that you 're in a darned bad way, and you 're now just about inside the borders of the territory of Delirium Tremens."

"O, that 's all very well," said Carrol, rousing himself by a strong effort, — "it 's all very well, and I don't doubt that there 's something in what you say. I do take a little too much, I confess. I 've never been a drinking man, and this last week I 've done a good deal in that way, I know; but at the same time the event of this night had nothing at all to do with that. And what I saw had nothing whatever to do with fancy or excitement. I was perfectly cool. I was dull and depressed, and I saw him, — I saw the Frenchman that I killed, — I saw him — not ten feet from me. It was no fancy; it was reality."

Grimes looked hard at Carrol, and his brows knit together in a frown of perplexity.

"You 'll have to tell me some more about it," said he, at last, "for I 'll be darned if I can make it out."

Carrol mechanically felt for his flask. But he could not find it, for the simple reason that he had left it behind him in his flight. On discovering this he leaned back in a resigned way, and, drawing a long breath, he began to tell his story. He narrated the story very circumstantially indeed, omitting no incident, until he reached the point where the dread figure had appeared before him. Here he began to work into his story details that belonged rather to fancy than to fact, and threw around the figure that he described all the terrible accessories that had been created by his own feverish imagination. To all this Grimes listened with profound silence.

that singular anxiety and that ill-concealed remorse which had appeared in his face as he listened to Carrol's first story. The feelings that were thus expressed had agitated him ever since, making him preoccupied, troubled, and ill at ease. He had been brooding over this at the very time when Carrol had rushed into the cabin. But now, as he listened to this new story, the effect that it produced upon him was of such a nature that it led to a complete overturn of his feelings; and the change was plainly visible in his face and manner. The dark shadow of anxious care passed away from his brow. Over his face there came its natural expression, that air of broad content, of bland and philosophic calm, of infinite self-complacency and heartfelt peace, which formed the well-known characteristics of California Grimes. But there was even more than this; there came over his face a positive joyousness, — a certain hilarious glee, which seemed to show that Carrol's story conveyed to his mind a far deeper meaning than any which was perceptible to the narrator. There were indeed moments in which that hilarious glee seemed about to burst forth in a way which would be perceptible to other senses than that of sight; but Carrol did not notice it at all; he did not see the shakings of soul that communicated themselves to the vast body of his friend, nor did he mark the smile that at times deepened into a grin, and threatened to make itself known in a peal of stentorian laughter. For Carrol's eyes, as he spoke, were solemnly fixed upon the floor, nor was he conscious of anything else but the remembrances of that terrific visitation which he was describing to Grimes.

At length he ended his story, and then there was a long pause.

It was at last terminated by Grimes.

"Wal," said he, "you 've made up a pooty tough story, but, looking at it in a calm and rational manner, I can come to only one of two conclusions. The fust

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too much. This is confirmed by your own confession, for you were just going to take a further drop when the flask took a drop of its own accord. Think now, might n't you have been a victim to some infernal hallucination or other, brought on by *delirium tremens?*"

Carrol shook his head impatiently.

"You don't allow it? Very well then. What is the other of my conclusions? The other one is this. It was not a fancy; it was not a deception. You actilly saw him. And mind you, when I say that you *saw* him, I mean that you actilly saw *him*, that is, the Frenchman — Du Potiron — himself — and no other. And when I say himself, I mean himself in the flesh. Yes, you saw him. And what does that mean? Why, it means that he is aboard of this very boat, and hence we have one more surprise to add to the other surprises of this eventful day."

At this Carrol raised his eyes with a reproachful look, and disconsolately shook his head.

"I tell you," cried Grimes, energetically, "he ain't dead."

Carrol sighed heavily.

"O, you need n't sigh and groan in that style," said Grimes. "I tell you again, he ain't dead; and you maybe have seen him. And I dar say the miserable frog-eatin' cuss was as much frightened at the sight of you as you were at the sight of him."

"O, as to that," said Carrol, moodily, "that 's impossible. I tell you I heard him fall. He fell — at — the — first — shot."

As he said this a shudder passed over him.

"How do you know?" asked Grimes.

"Know? Why, I heard the terrible sound of his fall."

"Sound? sound?" said Grimes. "Why, that 's nothin'. No one can tell anythin' from a sound. A sound may mean anythin'. No; you did n't see him, and so you don't know anythin' about it. You 're givin' way altogether too much to your imagination. It 's my opinion that either you were a this Frenchman is aboard this here steamer. Come, now, what do you say? Let 's go for'ard, and take a look through the second cabin. Let 's hunt up the miserable devil, and ask him all about it. Come, what do you say?"

At this proposal a shudder passed through Carrol.

"I won't," said he, abruptly, "I 'll stay here. I can't go, and I won't. It 's too much. Let me wait till I get over this. I can't stand it. You 're too hard on a fellow. You don't understand."

Grimes leaned back in his chair and made no reply.

For several days the effect of this "visitation" was very strong on Carrol. Grimes went forward and inspected all the passengers carefully, but saw nothing of Du Potiron, nor could he learn anything that might lead him to suppose that he was on board. Gradually, therefore, he fell back from this belief to the other, and concluded that it was an hallucination, superinduced by a diseased brain, consequent upon excessive indulgence in liquor. He still continued, however, to spend nearly all his time forward, out of a feeling of delicacy. He feared that his presence might be embarrassing to Mrs. Lovell, and therefore determined to keep out of her way.

After a few days Carrol ventured upon deck. He had as good a reason as Grimes for avoiding the after part of the vessel; for he did not care about encountering Maud. If he thus avoided her, it was certainly out of no regard for her feelings, but simply out of the strength of his own aversion. He was still a prey to those dark and vindictive feelings which had thus far animated him; which were intensified by every new trouble, and which led him to consider her as the unprincipled author of all his woes. The time that he passed on deck he chose to spend with Grimes forward, in those parts where ladies seldom or never venture; and he concluded that these ladies would have their own reasons for not coming there.

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plans of action for the sake of avoiding Carrol; and so she went up on deck whenever she chose, generally establishing herself near the stern. Mrs. Lovell never made any objections; nor did she ever express any fear about meeting with Grimes. The ladies were very respectable sailors, and, as the weather was fine, they were able to avail themselves to an unusually large extent of the freedom and breeziness of the upper deck.

Grimes and Carrol were very early risers, and it was their habit to go up before sunrise and wait until breakfast-time. At this hour they had the freedom of the ship, and could go to the stern if they chose.

One morning it happened that Mrs. Lovell expressed a great desire to see the sun rise; and she and Maud made an arrangement to enjoy that rare spectacle on the following day. As the day broke they were ready, and left their room and ascended to the upper deck. It was a glorious morning. They stood for a moment as they first emerged, and inhaled the fresh, invigorating sea air, and looked with rapture at the deep blue sky, and the wide expanse of water, and the lurid heavens in the east all glowing with the splendor of the sun's first rays. After enjoying this sufficiently they turned and walked toward the stern.

When they had traversed about half the distance, they noticed two men standing there, the sight of whom gave a separate and distinct sensation to each of them. At that very moment the two men had turned, and appeared about to walk back toward them. The moment they turned, however, they saw the ladies. They stopped for about five seconds, in evident embarrassment. The ladies were perhaps equally embarrassed, but they walked on mechanically. Then one of the gentlemen turned abruptly, and, descending some steps at the stern, he went down to the main deck. After a moment's hesi- dies could see the tops of their hats, and almost involuntarily they turned and watched the two fugitives. As they did so they saw a figure standing near the smoke-stack, with a heavy cloak flung around him and a felt hat on his head. His face was turned toward them, but he was watching the two men. As these latter approached him and reached a place amidships where steps led to the upper deck, he suddenly turned, and, walking forward with swift steps, he disappeared.

"Did you see that man?" said Maud, in a low, hurried tone.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lovell.

"It 's Du Potiron!" said Maud, in some agitation. "How perfectly unaccountable!"

"I 'm sure I don't think it 's unaccountable at all," said Mrs. Lovell. "I don't think anything 's unaccountable now. Did n't you notice Mr. Grimes? Did n't you notice his extraordinary behavior. After such conduct on his part, I decline to be astonished at anything."

"But only think," said Maud, "of Monsieur Du Potiron being here, and the others also! Why, it seems as though what we thought to be such a great secret was known to all the world."

"I should n't at all wonder," said Mrs. Lovell, "if all our friends and acquaintances were one by one to appear and disappear before us in the course of this voyage. I have given up wondering. The thing that has exhausted all my capacity for wonder, and shown me the utter hollowness and vanity of that emotion, is the shocking behavior of Mr. Grimes. Do you know, Maudie dear, he has fallen terribly in my estimation. Such rudeness, you know! Why, it fairly takes one's breath away to think of it! Positively, he ran away from us. And yet he professes to be my great friend. Why, do you know, Maudie dear, I really begin to be ashamed of him!"

"I should think that you ought to have been ashamed of him all along," said Maud.

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the kind," said Mrs. Lovell, "and it is very, very unjust in you to use such language, Maudie. For after all, when one thinks of it, his conduct is very natural and very delicate. His weak point is his utter delicacy. He is afraid that he will be intrusive if he speaks to me. That is the reason why he avoids me. Don't you see how carefully he keeps himself out of sight? The poor fellow has tracked me secretly, and is determined to follow me to the end of the world, but is afraid of showing himself. It is his utter devotion, combined with his entire self-abnegation. Now, do you know, Maudie dear, I see something uncommonly pathetic in such a situation as that."

At this Maud subsided into silence, and the ladies walked slowly toward the stern.

XI.

AT SEA.

AFTER they had been out about a week they encountered a gale which was violent enough to keep most of the passengers below. On the second day it began to subside, and Mrs. Lovell determined to go on deck. Maud, however, was not in a position to make the attempt, and so Mrs. Lovell was compelled to go alone. In spite of the fear which she had expressed of the dangers that threatened her apart from Maud, she showed no hesitation on this occasion, but after declaring that any further confinement below would be her death, she ventured forth and gained the deck.

The storm was subsiding, the sky was clearer, and the wind blew less violently; but the sea was exceedingly rough, even more so, in fact, than it had been at the height of the gale. The steamer pitched and rolled excessively, and the miserable passengers who had felt the horrors of sea-sickness had no prospect of immediate relief as yet. Mrs. Lovell, however, was among the fortunate few who can defy those horrors thus far, it was more on account of the rain than the motion of the vessel.

On reaching the deck Mrs. Lovell stood for a few moments holding on to the railing, and looking around her for some place to which she might go. Having at length chosen a spot, she ventured forth, and letting go her hold of the railing, to which she had thus far clung, she endeavored to walk toward the point which she wished to reach. It needed but a few steps, however, to show her that this journey, though very short, was very difficult and very hazardous. The vessel was pitching and tossing as it moved over the heavy seas; and to walk over its decks required far more skill and experience than she possessed. She walked a few paces; then she stood still; then she crouched as a huge wave raised the vessel high in the air; then as it fell she staggered forward a few steps, and stood there looking around. She looked around helplessly for some place of refuge; and as she stood there her face assumed such an expression of refined woe, of elegant distress, and of ladylike despair, as might have touched the heart of any beholder who was not an absolute stock or stone. One beholder's heart was touched at any rate, and he was anything but a stock or stone.

As Mrs. Lovell stood in her picturesque attitude, in all the charm of her helplessness, there was suddenly revealed a stalwart form, which rushed to her assistance. It was no other than Grimes, who had taken advantage of the stormy weather to air his manly figure at the stern of the vessel, which thus far he had so carefully avoided. The sudden and unexpected appearance of Mrs. Lovell had transfixed him with astonishment; but the sight of Mrs. Lovell in distress had called forth all the more chivalrous instincts of his nature. Her helplessness, and the mute appeal of that beautiful face, had at once roused his warmest feelings, and accordingly he sprang forth from behind the mizzen-

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rushed to her relief.

Grimes was not the man to do things by halves. As he had come to rescue her, he determined to effect that rescue thoroughly. He did not, therefore, offer his arm, or his hand, or anything of that sort, but quietly yet firmly passed his left arm around her waist, and with his right hand seized both of hers, and in this way he carried her rather than led her to what he considered the most convenient seat. But the most convenient seat in his estimation happened to be the one that was most distant from the particular spot where he had rescued her; and so it happened that he had to carry her thus in his encircling arm all the way from this place to the stern of the vessel. Arriving here, he retained her for a moment in his grasp, and seemed as though he was meditating a further journey, but Mrs. Lovell struggled away and subsided into a seat.

"O thanks, Mr. Grimes!" she said. "How very fortunate it was that you were here to help me! I 'm sure I have n't any idea what would ever have become of me, if you had n't come to my relief. I was just beginning to give up. Positively I was in actual despair —"

At this an awkward silence followed. Grimes took a seat by her side, looking perfectly radiant, but he did not appear to have anything in particular to say.

"I 'm sure," continued Mrs. Lovell, "I don't see how you ever managed to walk so very straight, and especially with — with — that is," hesitated Mrs. Lovell, "under such very peculiar circumstances. I 'm sure I could not have made any progress at all. And so, you know, I think you must have been a great sailor, Mr. Grimes."

"O no, 'm," said Grimes, "nothin' much; only I certainly have got on my sea legs, though I don't brag on my seamanship."

"O, but you know," said Mrs. Lovell, in a vivacious manner, "you really must be; and then, poor me, I 'm rough, Mr. Grimes."

"Wal," said Grimes, in a tone which was meant to be consolatory and sympathetic, and all that, "it 's a lucky thing for you that you ain't sea-sick. Why, there 's people aboard now that 'd give any amount o' money to be able to sit down as you do without feeling qualmish."

"I 'm sure I don't know," said Mrs. Lovell, in a sweet voice, "what would ever have become of me if it had n't been for you, Mr. Grimes."

"O, don't mention it, 'm, I beg," said Grimes, earnestly. "Just as if I did n't like to do it. Why, I — I — I enjoyed it, — I fairly gloated over it. I —"

"But, O Mr. Grimes," said Mrs. Lovell, interrupting him and looking afar out over the boisterous sea, "is n't it really delightful? I enjoy this so very much. Don't you think those waves are really quite magnificent? And that sky! why, it 's really worth coming miles to see. Those colors are perfectly astonishing. Do you notice what a very vivid red there is over there among those clouds, — very vivid, — just a trifle vulgar, you know; but then really fine, — an air of barbaric grandeur, — it is really wonderful. Don't you think so, Mr. Grimes?"

Grimes looked earnestly toward the scene which Mrs. Lovell admired so greatly, and saw a gorgeous display of brilliant sunshine contrasting with gloomy storm-clouds, forming one of those grand spectacles that often present themselves upon the ocean, where light and shade are all at war, where a flood of burning fire pours down upon the sea, and the wild waves toss and rage and chafe amid wide seas of purple foam. This was on one side of the horizon, but everywhere else there were dark waves and gloomy clouds. Grimes looked upon this with a feeling of admiration which was natural under the circumstances, and tried hard for a time to express that admiration. But whether his admiration was not up to the mark, or whether it was that lan-

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contented himself at length with making the following very simple yet rather inadequate remark: —

"Yes, 'm."

"Yes, it really is," continued Mrs. Lovell, "and it 's so nice for me; for do you know, Mr. Grimes, I 'm never afraid at sea, only about the boiler? If it should burst, you know; and in that case," continued Mrs. Lovell, with an air of mild dejection, "I really don't know what I should do. Boilers are really such awful things, and I really do wish they would n't have them; don't you, Mr. Grimes?"

"Well, I don't know, 'm," said Grimes, slowly and hesitatingly, as he saw Mrs. Lovell's eyes fixed inquiringly on his, feeling also very desirous to agree with her, yet not being altogether able to do so, — "I don't know, 'm. You see we could n't very well do without them. They 're a necessary thing — "

"Now, how really nice it is," said Mrs. Lovell, in a tone of profound gratification, — "how really nice it is to know all about such things! I really envy you, and I wish you 'd begin now and tell me all about it. I 've always longed so to understand all about boilers and things, Mr. Grimes. Now what are boilers?"

"Boilers? boilers?" said Grimes, — "boilers? why, 'm, they 're — they 're boilers, you know — "

"Yes, but what makes them explode so, all the time, and kill people?"

Thus challenged, Grimes gathered up all the resources of his powerful brain, and entered upon a full, complete, and exhaustive description of the steam-engine; taking especial care to point out the important relation borne by the boiler to the rest of the machine, and also to show how it was that under certain circumstances the said boiler would explode. He gave himself up completely to his subject. He grew earnest, animated, eloquent. He explained the difference between the locomotive engine and the steamboat engine, between the fire-engine and with a series of harrowing accidents.

To all this Mrs. Lovell listened in silence and in patience. She never uttered a word, but sat with her large dark eyes fixed on his, and an earnest expression of devout attention upon her face.

At length Grimes came to a conclusion.

"O, thanks, very much!" said Mrs. Lovell. "It 's really so very kind of you, and I 'm so very stupid, you know; but is n't it very odd that you and I should meet in this way? I 'm sure I was never so astonished in all my life."

At this most sudden and unexpected turn of the conversation, which in an instant was switched off from the line of science to that of delicate private affairs, Grimes looked fairly stunned with embarrassment.

"I — I — I," said he, stammering, — "I 'm sure I can't account for it at all."

"How very funny! Only fancy!" sighed Mrs. Lovell.

After this there was a silence, and Grimes began to murmur something about its being an accident, and about his astonishment being the same as hers. To all this Mrs. Lovell listened without any particular attention, and at length asked him abruptly, "You 're going to Paris, I suppose?"

"Yes, 'm," said Grimes, solemnly; and then he added in an explanatory way, "You see, 'm, Paris is a fine place, and the French are a fine people."

"How very funny!" said Mrs. Lovell again, not, of course, meaning that the character which Mr. Grimes attributed to the French was funny, but rather referring to the fact that Paris was his destination.

At this point, however, Mrs. Lovell made a motion to return to the cabin. The conversation of Mr. Grimes about the steam-engine, or rather his lecture on that subject, had taken up a good hour, and she did not feel inclined to remain longer. As she rose to go, Grimes made a movement to convey her back in the same manner in which

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and dexterously eluded him. She declared that the vessel did not roll at all now, though the motion was quite as violent as it had been before, and that she was able to walk without any difficulty. So she clung to the railing; and though Grimes walked by her side all the way, she managed to struggle to the cabin without his assistance.

On reaching the state-room she burst forth at once.

"O Maudie dear, who do you think I saw? and I've been with him ever since."

Maud had been lying in her berth in that quiescent and semi-torpid state which is generally affected by the average passenger in rough weather; but the remark of her sister roused her. She started up, leaning on her elbow, and looking at her with intense earnestness.

"Not — Mr. — Mr. Carrol," she said, slowly and hesitatingly.

"Mr. Carrol? No, of course not; I mean Mr. Grimes."

"Mr. Grimes? O, is that all?" said Maud; and with this she sank back to her former position.

"Is that all?" repeated Mrs. Lovell. "Well, do you know, Maudie, I call that a great deal," she continued, with some warmth; "especially when you bear in mind that he was waiting for me, — really lying in ambush, — and the moment I appeared he seized me in his arms."

"What!" cried Maud, in amazement, roused at once and completely out of her indifference and her torpor, and starting up as before upon her elbow, — "what! seized you!"

"Well, you know, Maudie, there was some excuse for it, for it was so rough that I could n't walk very well, and so he carried me to the stern."

"Carried you!" exclaimed Maud, in a tone of horror.

"O, I assure you, it was quite natural; and, what's more, I'm sure it was very kind of him; for really, one could no more walk than one could

"O Georgie! how very, very silly you are about that person!"

"He is n't a person at all," said Mrs. Lovell; "and I'm not silly, — I'm simply capable of common gratitude."

"O dear!" sighed Maud. "And so it's all beginning again, and we'll have it all over and over, and — "

"It is n't doing anything of the kind," said Mrs. Lovell. "Mr. Grimes is a very different sort of a man from what you suppose him to be. He's perfectly abominable, and I wish people would n't be so high-minded and consistent."

"Abominable — high-minded — consistent? What do you mean, Georgie?" said Maud, in deep perplexity.

"Why, I mean Mr. Grimes."

"Mr. Grimes? Of course. But what do you mean by talking in this confused way?"

"Why, I mean that his treatment of me was abominable, and that he is so changed that he seems quite like a different person."

"In what way is he changed?"

"O, you know, he does n't take any notice of me at all now! I'm nothing. I'm no more to him than — than — than the captain of the ship."

"Why, I'm sure," said Maud, "that's the last thing you ought to charge against him. Seizing you in his arms seems to be taking sufficient notice of you, and something more, in my humble opinion."

"O, but that was nothing more than common civility, you know!"

"Common civility!" exclaimed Maud.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lovell, "I don't mean that. I allude to his general manner when we were sitting down, when, if he had a spark of friendship left, he had every chance of showing it. Now, what do you think he talked about, — after tracking me all over North America, and following me over the Atlantic Ocean, what do you think he chose to talk to me about?"

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"Why," said Mrs. Lovell, indignantly, "he talked to me about nothing but tiresome steam-engines. And O, how he did go on! I 'm sure he might as well have talked Chinese. I did n't understand one word. Steam-engines! Think of that, Maudie. And after all that has passed between us!"

"Well, I 'm sure, Georgie, I 'm very, very glad to hear it."

"Well, for my part," said Mrs. Lovell, in a tone of vexation, "I have no patience with people that go on the theory that everybody is like the Medes and Persians, and never change their minds."

"Change their minds!" exclaimed Maud, in strong agitation; "O Georgie! what frightful thing do you mean by that? Do you intend by that to hint that you are changing your mind, and are willing to take back your refusal of that man? O Georgie! don't, don't, O, don't be altogether insane!"

"Don't be alarmed, Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell. "It 's all over. Mr. Grimes has become very, very commonplace. There used to be quite a zest in him. That is all over now. He is totally uninteresting. He has taken to lecturing on steam-engines. But then," continued she, in a doleful tone, "the worst of it is, I know it's all unnatural, and he does n't take any real interest in boilers and things. He only talks about such things, on account of that wretched constraint he exercises on himself, you know. And all the time there is n't any need for any constraint at all, you know."

"O my poor, silly Georgie, how in the world would you wish him to be?"

"Why, I should like him to be ordinarily friendly, of course; but as he is now, he is nothing. It's Grimes, but living Grimes no more. We start, for life is wanting there. He 's like a piano that won't play. He certainly can't expect *me* to take the initiative. I wish he would n't be so stupid; and do you know, Maudie dear, I hate to have you talk about him so," said Maud, impatiently. "He is nothing but a coarse, vulgar, commonplace man."

"But I like vulgar men," said Mrs. Lovell. "Refined people are so dreadfully commonplace and tiresome, —just a little dash of coarseness, you know, to give a zest to character. I don't mean very vulgar, of course, but only a little. I 'm sure, everybody is refined, and I 'm sure it 's very hard if one can't occasionally take refuge in a little slight vulgarity."

At this Maud groaned, but said not a word in reply.

XII.

IN PARIS.

THAT certain persons who had every reason to avoid one another, and who were actually in one sense running away from each other, should all find themselves on board the same ship, was certainly a strange coincidence. Under such circumstances, a meeting was of course inevitable; and hence they stumbled upon one another unexpectedly yet naturally enough, in the manner already described, and in a way more embarrassing than agreeable.

After this last meeting between Mrs. Lovell and Mr. Grimes, the weather continued stormy for some days. Maud remained below, partly on account of the weather, and partly for other reasons. The sight of Carrol had produced upon her a new dejection of mind, and his persistent aversion not only wounded but astonished her. In the narrow limits of a ship, while he was so near, it was not very easy to banish his image from her mind; and in spite of the appeals which she constantly made to her pride, the melancholy that arose from wounded affection was too strong to be overcome. Mrs. Lovell, however, was subject to no such weakness; and while Maud moped in her state-room, she sought

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the upper deck, where she would sit gazing forth upon the dark heaving sea, looking upward into the unfathomable depths of ether, and generally feeding her soul with thoughts of the Infinite and all that sort of thing; for as a matter of course, when a pretty woman chooses to sit alone gazing into space, the kindest conjecture which one may make about her thoughts is the above; all of which is respectfully submitted.

The result of Mrs. Lovell's profound speculations while thus sitting and gazing into space was not, however, of that elevated and transcendental character which may be fairly considered as the natural outcome of the Infinite. On the contrary, it generally had reference to the finite, the concrete, the visible, and the tangible, in short, to Mr. Grimes.

"He is a failure," she would say, very confidentially, to Maud, after a return from her meditations on deck, — "a total failure. And, Maudie, whenever you choose a friend, do not allow yourself to dwell too much upon him. For you see," Mrs. Lovell would continue, as Maud made no answer, speaking all the time in an abstracted tone, — "you see, Mr. Grimes is so very set, so obstinate, and so perfectly unreasonable. He is altogether too consistent, and he knows nothing whatever of the true spirit of chivalry."

"Chivalry!" exclaimed Maud, on one occasion, "what possible connection can there be between chivalry and a — a person like that."

"Chivalry!" said Mrs. Lovell, with some warmth; "I would have you know, Maudie, that Mr. Grimes is as perfectly chivalrous a man as ever lived. Why, only think how he rushed to help me when I was really almost on the point of being swept overboard! Positively he almost saved my life. And you have so little affection for me, that you sneer at him for that, — for saving my life, — for that is really what he did. Why, Maudie," continued Mrs. Lovell, solemnly, "I do really."

To this Maud made no reply, and Mrs. Lovell, after waiting for a moment, found her thoughts reverting to their former channel and went on: "Of course, he 's chivalrous and all that, as I said, but then he 's *so* provoking. He 's so fickle, you know, and changeable. But that 's the way with men always. They never know their own minds. As for Mr. Grimes, he 's so absurdly backward and diffident, that I really wonder how he manages to live. O, he would never do! And really, Maudie, do you know, I 've come to the conclusion that Mr. Grimes is a gigantic failure."

To this Maud made no reply, and Mrs. Lovell gradually wandered off to other subjects.

So the voyage passed away, and neither Mrs. Lovell nor Maud saw anything more of either Grimes or Carrol.

It was near the end of August when they arrived at Havre. Here they took the cars for Paris.

On reaching her destination, Mrs. Lovell drove at once to a place where she had lodged during a previous visit, some three or four years before, and where she expected to find a home during her stay in Paris. She was not disappointed. The house was under the management of a lady who was still at her post, and Madame Guimarin received her former lodger with a mixture of courtesy and enthusiasm that was at once impressive and seductive. To Mrs. Lovell's great joy, she found not only that there were vacant apartments, but that the best rooms in the house, in fact, all the rooms in the house, were entirely at her service. She had only to make her own selection. That selection Mrs. Lovell did accordingly make; and she chose the rooms which had become in a certain sense hallowed by the associations of her former visit, in which rooms she might find not so much a lodging as a home.

Such a reception was most unex-

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her good fortune. She told Maud about her previous visit, when it was difficult to get a lodging-place at all, and when the landlady seemed to be granting a favor on admitting her. Now all was changed, and the demeanor of Madame Guimarin seemed to show that the favor was all on Mrs. Lovell's side. The change was wonderful; but what the cause of that change might be, Mrs. Lovell did not stop to consider. She simply settled herself down under the hospitable care of Madame Guimarin, without seeking to know what might be the reason of such cordial and unwonted hospitality.

On reaching Havre, Grimes and Carrol had landed in such an unobtrusive way that they had not been seen by the ladies. At the same time they had no idea of stopping at Havre, and had accordingly started by the very first train for Paris. This was the same train which the ladies had taken, but in the confusion they had not been noticed. And so it was that they reached Paris at the same time, without either party being aware of the proceedings of the other. Nor was it difficult to elude observation, for at every station on the road there were too many objects to attract the attention and engross it. At every station there seemed to be a general haste and uproar which seemed like the wildest confusion,— a gathering of great crowds, and a Babel of many tongues. The train itself seemed an object of interest to many; and as the passengers stared out of the windows, the crowds at the station stared back. The train was a long one at starting, but it received constant additions as it went on, chiefly of a military character, until at length when it arrived at Paris the crowd that poured forth was immense.

In flying to Paris as his city of refuge, Carrol had relied upon two things: the first being the natural safety which any one would have in a city which is the common resort of fugitives from all person like himself would have amid the exciting events of a great war.

Now no sooner had he reached Paris and taken one look around, than he found the war at its height, and the nation in the crisis of its great agony. His own affairs had thus far attracted all his thoughts, so that he had none to spare for the struggle between France and Prussia; but now that he had arrived here, he found himself in the presence of a nation to whose heart a mighty pang of anguish had been flung, in comparison with which his own sorrows were the mere evils of a day.

For this was the beginning of September. The first blows of the war had been struck. France had been defeated and dishonored, and the Prussians were far in the land. Paris was in a state of siege. The armies of France were scattered; the Emperor was wandering about, no one knew where and no one cared. A frantic Ministry was trying to buoy up the hopes of a frantic people by inflated lies. The information which they gave was suspected by all; yet every one tried to force himself to believe it, and every one spoke confidently of the approaching vengeance of France, when she should clothe herself in consuming terror and in her fiery indignation devour the adversary.

Paris was in a state of siege, and preparations were being made by the authorities which showed that to them at least the approach of an enemy did not seem impossible. The environs were devastated; the forts prepared; the bridges blown up; the trees cut down; but this belt of desolation was not visible to the crowds inside the city, and the change was chiefly manifest to those who found themselves cut off from their usual recreation in the Bois de Boulogne.

But to the people who were thus surrounded by this ring of desolation and defence, it was as though these things were not; and the crowds in the streets

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of the French armies. Whether Bazaine's strategy or that of McMahon were the more profound, was a keenly disputed point. So profound was the strategy of each, however, that every one seemed to lose himself in a bottomless abyss whenever he ventured to discuss it. Still the confidence in their hearts was certainly not equal to that which their lips professed, as might easily be seen by the wild rumors that arose from time to time, the tales of sudden disaster, the tidings of fresh defeats, the panic fear that sometimes flashed simultaneously through vast multitudes, blanching their cheeks and stilling to awful silence the uproar of the people, —

"While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispered with white lips, 'The foe!
They come! They come!'"

Still, these panics, though they were quick to rise, were equally quick to subside; and after each sensation of this sort, the volatile people roused themselves anew to hope and to confidence. And the uproar sounded forth again, and the song arose, and the battle hymn, and the shout, and vengeance was once more denounced upon all the enemies of France.

Everybody was in uniform. There were the citizens who were National Guards. There were the peasants brought in from the country as Moblots. There were the marines, and sailors from the fleet. There were also the members of the ambulance corps, who served to remind the ardent citizen of the darker side of war.

The crowd that had been at the station when Carrol arrived had been immense, but not any larger than usual. For now there was always a great crowd there and at every railway station. There were those who were pouring into the city at the order of the government, soldiers for the field of battle, and peasants flying here from their deserted fields for refuge. There was also another crowd, consisting of the wives and children of citizens, sent away so as to be out of the reach of that siege which was already anticipated by the citizens, in spite of their confident boasts.

In all these scenes, in the excitement of alternating hope and fear that forever reigned in the thronged streets, and in the perpetual presence of one dominating and all-pervading idea, Carrol found that distraction of soul which formed the surest relief to his anxiety and remorse. He had so long brooded over his own griefs, that the presence of some engrossing subject outside of himself produced upon him an unmixed benefit. Grimes saw this with great gratification, and declared that Paris was the very place for Carrol.

He also asserted that Paris was the very place for himself. The excitement communicated itself to all of his sympathetic nature. He glowed under it; he revelled in it; he lived in the streets. He flung himself into the life of the people, and shared all their alternations of feeling. His opinion about the fortunes of the war, however, was certainly a little different from that of the average Parisian.

"The Prussian invasion," said he, "is a wholesome thing. It's good. King William is a fine man. So is the average Prussian. The French are too frivolous. Life can't be got to be made up out of nonsense. You can't do it. The French have got hold of somethin' serious at last, and, mark my words, it'll do 'em good."

But the day soon came which put a stop to all hope of victory, and in an instant dissipated the vast mass of lying rumors with which the atmosphere of Paris was filled. It was the day of Sedan. The tremendous intelligence could not be concealed or mitigated. It was a revelation of the whole of that black and dismal truth against which the people had shut their eyes. Down to the very last moment they

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and then that last moment came and all was known.

Then all Paris rose. Away went the government in flight. The Empress Regent disappeared. The Republic was proclaimed. Down came the Imperial cipher and the Imperial effigy, and every Imperial symbol from every public place; while in their place appeared the words which the Empire had obliterated eighteen years before, "Liberté, Fraternité, Egalité." And the old Republican leaders came forth and volunteered to become the leaders of the nation; old men came back from exile; and the irreconcilables seated themselves upon the throne of their fallen enemy.

Then too the panic, which thus far had been fitful and intermittent, spread itself broadly over the city, till it took possession of every heart. The terror for a time drove out every other feeling. Those who could fly did so as hastily as possible. The peasantry came pouring in from the country in greater numbers. The railroads were taxed to their utmost possible capacity; for now it was known that the conquering Prussians would soon arrive, and then what escape would there be?

But the panic could not last, and did not. Like other sensations, it had its day, and passed; and the new sensation which succeeded it was one universal enthusiasm over the Republic, combined with boundless confidence in the ability of the Republic to atone for the disgraces of the Empire, and to avenge them. The enthusiasm was also for a time accompanied by a pleasing hope that the Prussians would be satisfied with the fall of Napoleon, and come to easy terms with regenerated France; nor was it possible to quell this hope, until they had been very rudely disillusioned.

All these new and startling events only served to increase the effect which Parisian life had produced upon Carrol; and in the excitement that never ceased to be kindled all around him, he found an occupation for his mind that overturn of the government he also found the assurance of greater safety for himself; for with the revolution the old machinery would become a little disarranged, and the French police would necessarily be changed or modified, so that the chances for his escape from capture were greatly increased. His haunting dread of pursuit and arrest was now very much lessened, and a sense of comparative security came to him.

Grimes and Carrol generally separated for the day. Each made it his sole occupation to saunter about the public places, taking part in the general excitements and sharing in the sensations that from time to time might arise; but each preferred to go alone, and follow the bent of his own inclinations. On one such occasion Carrol was slowly sauntering down the Champs Elysées, looking dreamily around upon the scene, when suddenly he caught sight of something which gave him a greater shock than any that he had felt since his arrival. It was a carriage which was rolling along among many other carriages. In it were two ladies, and in the first glance that he gave he recognized Maud and Mrs. Lovell. In an instant they had rolled by, and he was left standing there, filled with amazement.

Ever since his arrival at Paris he had thought of Maud as being far away. On board of the steamer he had supposed that she was on her way to this city, but after his arrival he had taken it for granted that the perilous situation of the city would of course deter the ladies from coming to it at such a time, and that their most natural course would be to go to their friends in England. Yet now he found them actually here, and saw that they must have come at once to the place. He saw that they were still remaining, and that, too, after the great events that had occurred; after Sedan; after the Republic; at the very time when the minds of all were becoming familiar with the grim prospect of a siege. What this could pos-

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of that day, without his attaining to any satisfactory solution. Could they be aware of the facts of their situation? Of course they must be. What then could make them remain? He could not imagine.

In the evening he mentioned the subject to Grimes. As this was the first time that Carrol had volunteered to talk upon any subject, Grimes regarded this as a very favorable sign, and felt highly gratified.

"See here," said Carrol, "did you know *they* are here?"

"They? Who's 'they'?" asked Grimes.

"Why, the ladies."

"The ladies? O yes. I knew that. I saw them myself the other day."

"You saw them! Why, you did n't say anything about it. I should think you would have mentioned it."

"O no," said Grimes, coolly. "I did n't seem to see any necessity for mentioning it to you. I knew that it was an exciting topic, and that if I introduced the subject you 'd at once proceed to flare up. You see you always pitch into Miss Heathcote so infernally strong, that I can't stand it. She 's a person that I can't help respectin' somehow, in spite of your tall talk. Mark my words, there 's a mistake somewhere."

Carrol's face flushed at these last words, and he stared sternly at Grimes; but as the other looked away quite indifferently, he said nothing for a few moments. At last he remarked in a low thoughtful voice, "It 's queer, too, — confoundedly queer."

"What 's confoundedly queer?" asked Grimes.

"Why, that they should stay."

"Queer? Why, what is there queer about that?"

"What, don't you think it 's queer for two ladies to come to a city in such a row as this, and stay here through a regular revolution, when the enemy is approaching, and the siege may begin at any time? they did n't stay. This is the very time to be in Paris. Queer? Why, what makes us stay here, and what could induce either you or me to leave this place now and go away?"

"Pooh! Why, there 's all the difference in the world. They 're women."

"Women! and what then? Ain't women human beings? I think so. You 'll not deny that, I suppose. Yea, more. Have n't women got curiosity? Some. Have n't they got a slight tendency to excitement? Methinks. Don't they occasionally get their feelings roused and grow enthusiastic? Rather. Now, for my part, I imagine that Mrs. Lovell and Miss Heathcote find just as much fun in these proceedin's and in the general row that 's goin' on as either you or I. Yea, more. I don't believe any earthly indoocement would make them leave. Stay? Why, everybody ought to stay. Everybody ought to come here. Now 's the time to visit Paris. There has n't been such a time since the downfall of ancient Rome, and there won't be such another occasion for ever so many hundred years. Mrs. Lovell leave? What! And now? And after takin' all the trouble to come here? No, sir. Not she. Not if she knows it. I 'll bet on her. I tell you what, that woman 's bound to see this thing put through."

"O, come now, really now," said Carrol, "you don't suppose that Mrs. Lovell is superior to all the usual weaknesses of woman. She is as timid as women generally are."

"I deny that women are timid," said Grimes, solemnly.

"O, if it comes to that, why, there 's nothing more to say."

"I deny that they 're timid where their feelings are really concerned. You get a woman regularly excited, and she 'll go through fire and water. She 'll go wherever a man will."

"O, that 's all very well, in a few rare cases, when their affections are engaged, and they get half insane; but

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you know, and for my part I confess I 'm puzzled."

"Well, for my part," said Grimes, "I glory in it."

"There 's some mysterious motive," said Carrol, "something under the surface."

"There 's nothing but pure, real, genuine pluck," said Grimes. "She 's clear grit."

Carrol shook his head suspiciously, and finding that Grimes would not help him to discover this supposed dark motive that actuated the ladies, he subsided into a somewhat sullen silence.

XIII.

AN UNEXPECTED CALL.

THE place in which Mrs. Lovell and Maud had taken up their quarters was somewhat remote from the busy centres of Parisian life, and if there was any change in the appearance of the city it was not generally visible. It was only when they went out for a drive that they saw the unusual animation and excitement of the streets, and even then the change did not seem so great as it actually was.

Upon Maud, Paris did not produce that exhilarating effect which it generally does on the new-comer. In fact, since her arrival she seemed to have sunk into deeper dejection. On board the steamer, as long as Carrol was near her, there was a kind of excitement in the idea of that neighborhood which acted as a stimulus to her mind, and was involuntarily associated with faint hopes of a reconciliation. But now he was gone, and her life became dull and dead. There was no longer any hope of reconciliation, nor any expectation of seeing him. She wondered whether he had come to Paris or not, but concluded that he had not. Why, indeed, should he? His hatred of her was so bitter that his only motive would be to avoid her. True, he had followed her to the steamer, but she began to think now that this might have been an accident, and so, as the days passed, she gradually lost hope.

Mrs. Lovell saw this dejection, and remonstrated with Maud about it.

"Why, really, Maudie," she would say, "I thought you had more pride; after all, your condition is n't as bad as mine. Look at me. Only think how I 've been deceived in Mr. Grimes. Now, I know very well that you 're moping about that wretched Mr. Carrol, but it 's very weak in you. Be like me. Do as I do. Conquer your feelings, and be bold and brave and heroic."

In the effort to assist Maud to become bold and brave and heroic, Mrs. Lovell urged her to drive out, and so they used to drive out nearly every day. During those drives, Maud's mind was not much impressed with the striking scenes which the great city presented, but was rather occupied by one controlling idea that made her blind to the charm of Parisian life. As she drove through the streets and boulevards and looked out upon the crowds, the idea of Carrol never left her, and she was always searching after his face. She noticed nothing and thought of nothing in all her drives but this, and the noise and the tumult and all the busy preparations for war were disregarded.

But at length, as time passed on, this noise and tumult and these preparations for war grew to such proportions that they forced themselves upon her attention. She saw the doors and windows of the Louvre gradually closing up behind protective barricades. She saw those barricades arising around the statues and monuments of the city, and beautiful groves changing into fields of stumps. A drive to the Bois de Boulogne was sufficient at length to arouse the attention of the most preoccupied soul, and this drive did not fail to impress Maud.

"What can be the meaning of it?" she asked in surprise.

Mrs. Lovell confessed her inability to account for it.

"Something must be going on."

"Perhaps the trees died, and had to

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"and if so, what a pity! They were so beautiful."

"O no, it must have something to do with the war. Is it possible that they can be preparing for a siege of Paris?"

"A siege of Paris! what utter nonsense! How can there be a siege of Paris?"

"Why, this war may be unfortunate for the French."

"O, that 's absurd! The French made the war for political purposes. It 's all the Emperor, Maudie. He 's a wonderful man. And it was only for political purposes. It 's just the same here as an election is with us."

"I wish I 'd seen some of the papers. Have you seen any, Georgie?"

"The papers? O dear, no! I never read the papers."

"I remember," said Maud, thoughtfully, "I saw a paper the other day and read a little in it. I did n't take much interest in it at the time, but I remember now that something was said about some defeats of the French, and that the defeats would be made good."

"Defeats? Of the French? O, nonsense! The Prussians, you mean?"

"O no! I mean the French. Something of that sort must have happened. And now, when I think of it, the paper certainly spoke of the Prussians being in France, — for it said that none of them should ever escape."

"The Prussians in France?" said Mrs. Lovell, thoughtfully. "Well, really, Maudie, that is better than I expected. How very nice that would be, if it were really so. Why, we would have a chance to see a battle, perhaps, who knows? Why, do you know, Maudie, the greatest desire of my life has always been to see a battle. I think I 'd go miles to see one. Yes, miles. Why, if I really thought the Prussians were here, I think I 'd try to find out in what direction they were coming, and engage rooms there to see the battle. That 's the way Byron did at the battle of Waterloo, and he wrote such a lovely poem; not that I could I sometimes think, do you know, that I have the soul of a poet."

Maud did not seem to be listening. An anxious expression was on her face.

"It 's horrible," she exclaimed, — "it 's too horrible."

"Horrible! What 's horrible?"

"Why, if the Prussians should really be coming to Paris."

"Nonsense."

"Well, I really begin to think that there must be some danger of it. The more I think of it the more certain I feel. The papers spoke so very strangely."

"The papers! But, Maudie, I hope you don't think anything of what the papers say. They 're always saying all sorts of things, you know. For my part, I never believe anything that the papers say, and I never read them."

"But look at all these preparations. Don't they look as though the people here expected a siege or something?"

"My dear Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell, confidently, "the people, as you call them, have nothing whatever to do with these preparations. It 's all the Emperor. He does it for effect. He has some deep-laid plan. He 's always contriving something or other to excite the Parisians. The Parisians need some excitement. Now the Emperor sees that they are tired to death of *fêtes* and shows and splendor, so he is defacing the statues, putting up barricades, and chopping down the trees to create a grand sensation. He intends to make himself very popular by all this. He is getting up the pretence of a siege, and then he will come and pretend to save Paris. Something of that sort is his intention I know. That 's the way he always does, you know, and that 's the only way he can manage to retain his power over such an extraordinary people as the Parisians."

To this somewhat singular theory Maud had no objections to make, and Mrs. Lovell, finding the course clear

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till they returned.

Not long after reaching the house, a gentleman called. He did not give his name, but as this was the only caller they had thus far known, both of the ladies were filled with an excitement which, under the circumstances, was not at all unnatural. At first, Maud thought of Carrol; but a little reflection showed her that such a thing could scarcely be; and so she checked at once that rush of eager emotion which was hurrying her away to greet the caller, and experienced such a reaction of feeling that she resolved not to go down at all. But with Mrs. Lovell the excitement was unalloyed, and there was nothing to disturb the pleasing expectation that filled her mind.

"So you won't come, Maudie," she said, as she was leaving the room. "Well, perhaps you 'd better not. You never could bear him, you were always so prejudiced; though, for my part, I really think that you do injustice to Mr. Grimes's many admirable qualities."

There was a sweet smile on Mrs. Lovell's face as she entered the room, and her face had an expression of quiet yet cordial welcome as she looked toward the caller. But the moment that she caught sight of the caller, a complete change came over her; the smile died away; the look of cordial welcome vanished; and there remained only a look of cold surprise. For the person before her was not Grimes at all.

He was a sharp-featured man, and was dressed in the uniform of the National Guard, which, however, did not give him, by any means, the air of the true professional *militaire*. On the contrary, his clothes were a little ill-fitting, and he showed some uneasiness about his sword. As Mrs. Lovell entered, he sprang toward her with much animation and an air of the greatest *empressement*.

"Madame," said he, "I am mos happy zat I haf ze honneur to salute you."

both hands. Mrs. Lovell, however, did not at all reciprocate this ardor. On the contrary, she regarded him coolly, taking no notice whatever of his hands, and then gave a stiffish bow. She said nothing, nor did she offer him a chair, or show him any civility whatever. Now, if it was her disappointment about Mr. Grimes that elicited such rudeness from such a gracious lady, then her disappointment must have been very bitter to her; but if it was merely her dislike to Du Potiron himself that animated her, then her dislike was wonderfully strong to be felt by such a kind-hearted and gentle-mannered person.

But Du Potiron did not notice this, or, if he did, he quite ignored it. On the contrary, he proceeded to go through a series of complicated movements, which seemed to show that monsieur was less a gentleman than a dancing-master. First he put his right hand on his heart, then he made a great sweep of his hat with his left hand, and then he bowed so low that he went quite beneath the line of Mrs. Lovell's vision. After which he raised himself, still keeping his hand on his heart, and made another flourish with his hat.

"Madame," said he, "pardon me, but I sall haf to apologize zat I haf not pay my respects before."

"O, apologies are quite unnecessary!" said Mrs. Lovell, quickly. "I did not expect it at all, I assure you."

"Ze raison haf been," continued Du Potiron, "I haf not been able to find ze place unteel zees moment. Mais à présent, I sall be mos happay."

Mrs. Lovell made no remark at this, but still stood regarding him with a cool and easy stare that would have been embarrassing to any one else.

"Moreovaire, madame," continued Du Potiron, "I haf to offaire mes apologies zat I haf not ze honneur to pay mes respects to you on ze voyage, — mais voyez-vous, madame, cette malheureuse bouleversement et enfeeblement, cette je ne sais quoi du mal de

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of my powaire to saluter you. Hein? Comprenez?"

"Your remarks are totally unintelligible, monsieur," said Mrs. Lovell, "and I am still at a loss to understand the object of this visit."

"Moi," said Du Potiron, "I am Frenchman. Un Français is nevaire noting in ze sea, but in ze land he become heemself. Mais vous, madame, I haf ze hope sincerement zat you haf had ze voyage plaisant."

"Quite, thanks," said Mrs. Lovell, whose patience was beginning to give way.

"Et à present," continued the unterrified one, "ees eet youair intention to haf a stay long?"

"We have not decided."

"Ah, you haf ze intention to leave soon, probablement."

"Not that I am aware of."

"Aha, zat is good, foine, brave, sage, noble, magnifique!" cried Du Potiron, in an enthusiastic outburst, which amazed Mrs. Lovell. "Ma foi! So you haf no fear. C'est charmant; so you weel stay. Aha? Bien," he continued, suddenly subsiding from a tone of exultation to the manner of a dry logician, — "bien, for see you, madame, zaire ees no dang-jaire. Zees war sall go on, and la France moos be victorr. Ze République Française ees invincible! Eh bien. So you sall stay. Eh? Ver well. Zen you sall see ze triomphe, ze exultation, ze enthousiasme irrepressible! You sall see Guillaume a prisoner, a captif, and Moltke and Bismarck and all ze entire army Prussian —"

All this was more unintelligible than ever to Mrs. Lovell; and as her patience was now quite exhausted, she resolved to retire.

"Excuse me," said she, quietly, "but, really, I know nothing of politics, and I have to go."

"Ah, mille pardons," cried Du Potiron, hastily; "what, you go! Ma foi. Mais, permettez-moi. Ah, I am distracte wit chagrin zat I haf not see ze mees charmante. Villa you haf ze fadaire —"

"I do not understand you," said Mrs. Lovell, in a more frigid tone than ever.

"Ze mees — ze mees —"

"The what?"

"Ze charmante mees."

"This is quite unintelligible," said Mrs. Lovell.

"Mees Mo," persisted Du Potiron, eagerly, "cette charmante Mo."

"Mo, — Mo?" repeated Mrs. Lovell, in a puzzle.

"Yaiss — Mees Mo — Deetcot —"

"Miss Maud Heathcote," repeated Mrs. Lovell, who at length made out the name. "What of her, pray?"

"Oui, oui," cried Du Potiron, eagerly, "le Mees Mo Deetcot; I beg you to kongvay to cette charmante Mo ze assurance of my esteem ze mos distingué, and my affection ze mos tendaire."

At this Mrs. Lovell's face flushed with indignation. She looked at him for a moment as though preparing some severe rejoinder, but finally seemed to think better of it, and then turning without a word or even a nod she left the room.

At this inexcusable rudeness, Monsieur du Potiron stood for a moment staring after her. Then he shook his fist at the door through which she had retreated. Then he painfully gathered up his sword, and in as graceful a manner as possible left the house.

Great was Maud's surprise at hearing from Mrs. Lovell who the caller had been. Great also was her amazement at Du Potiron's impudence in still hinting at the mistaken acceptance by claiming her in that way; and the contempt which she expressed was limitless and immeasurable. But in the midst of all this the thought occurred to her that possibly Du Potiron might not have received the explanatory letter which she had sent, and might still consider her in all seriousness as his *fiancée*. She mentioned this to Mrs. Lovell, but that lady did not deign to consider the matter.

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person thinks? He will never come in our way. You know I always disapproved of your explanations, and certainly I should not like you to commit yourself to any more."

In spite of this, Maud was somewhat troubled as to certain puzzling things which Du Potiron's visit had suggested.

On the following day they were out driving when an incident occurred which had the effect of giving a deeper meaning to Du Potiron's call than before, and of increasing those puzzling questions to which his visit had given rise. This was that incident before referred to, — their meeting with Carrol. The surprise was as great to Maud as to him, and so was the embarrassment. Neither one knew that the other was in Paris. Carrol had supposed that the ladies had some time ago fled from this place of danger; and Maud had not supposed that Carrol had come to Paris at all. But now each one knew that the other was here in this city, within reach and within call.

But their discovery of one another's proximity created very different feelings in each. The effect produced upon Carrol has been mentioned. But upon Maud this discovery had a different result. It at once gave a new meaning to the visit of Du Potiron. One thing from that visit was evident, and it was this, that he still regarded her as his *fiancée*. The only conclusion that she could draw from that was that he had not received her letter of explanation. And if that were so, it now seemed equally probable that Carrol had not received the letter which she had sent to him. The very thought of this agitated her most profoundly, and gave rise to a thousand wild plans of finding him out even now, and of learning for herself in a personal interview what Carrol's sentiments really were.

The greatest puzzle of all was in the voyage. They had all come over together. Carrol, as she thought, had evidently followed her, from what moParis. Du Potiron had come too, and it now appeared as if the Frenchman had come with the purpose of urging his claims upon her. She now began to think it possible that from some cause or other her explanatory letters had not reached either of them, but that both had crossed the ocean under a totally wrong impression. This would account, as she thought, for Du Potiron's pursuit, and for Carrol's inflexible wrath. While thinking of these things she could not help wondering whether they had met or not on board the steamer; but a moment's reflection showed her that they could only regard one another as enemies, and that each would avoid any intercourse with the other. It was therefore clearly impossible that they could have had any explanation.

These ideas created the most intense excitement in the mind of Maud. It was a misunderstanding which could so easily be cleared up. Carrol was only laboring under a delusion. If she could only see him, how quickly she could explain. So now the question of her life became how to see him. Should she write? But she did n't know his address. It seemed better to wait, and keep a constant outlook so as to secure a personal interview.

Meantime she kept her thoughts and resolutions to herself, for Mrs. Lovell's want of sympathy with Carrol prevented her from being of any service in securing Maud's desires.

XIV.

AN AGGRESSIVE CALL.

At length the long-expected event took place. The last effort to avert it had failed. The Prussians were approaching and the siege was at hand. The preparations for that siege had reached their last stage and their climax. The full measure of the coming trial might be seen in the vast accumulations of provisions, the immense

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of cattle. The flight of the people became more desperate; the influx of the peasantry also reached its height. The overburdened cars carried away all who could go. The government departed. The foreign ambassadors departed, leaving Minister Washburne alone to face the situation. At length the last railroad was intercepted, the last telegraphic wire cut, and Paris lay shut out from the world.

In the mean time Mrs. Lovell and Maud had been living in the same way, varying the quiet of their seclusion by a daily drive. Maud did not again see Carrol in the streets, nor did Mrs. Lovell see Grimes anywhere. Their attention was occasionally arrested by some new construction bearing upon the defence of the city, or by the march of some larger body of troops than usual; but these things did not excite any very deep interest. Mrs. Lovell's opinion as to the state of affairs in Paris, and the perfect safety of that city, she had already given, nor had she changed it; and Maud's one engrossing thought was the discovery of Carrol among the crowds that thronged the streets. And so it was that Paris was shut up at last, without the actual fact being even suspected by either of the ladies.

One day, after they had returned from a drive, a caller was announced. This time their thoughts at once turned to Du Potiron, and they sent word that they were not at home. Upon this the caller, who had not sent up his name before, sent in his card. With some curiosity they examined it. It was simply, M. le Comte du Potiron.

"His impertinence is certainly engaging," remarked Mrs. Lovell, quietly, "but what he can possibly expect to gain by it I cannot imagine."

With this she sent back word that she was engaged.

But the irrepressible Du Potiron was not to be so easily shaken off. He at once sent back a most urgent request for an interview,—just for a little moment,—it was about matters of great importance.

At this persistence Mrs. Lovell was quite annoyed, but at the same time the message which he sent was adapted to excite a little curiosity, so she checked the reply which she was on the point of sending, and decided on seeing for herself what he wanted.

"I shall see what he wants," she said, "and I must at the same time put a stop to his silly persistency in visiting us. I never liked him. I simply tolerated him at Montreal; but here I don't wish to recognize him."

With these words Mrs. Lovell went down. Du Potiron was waiting there, dressed in the uniform of the National Guard, as on the last occasion. He advanced as before with outstretched hands, and with an enthusiastic smile, just as if he and Mrs. Lovell were warm and intimate friends; just as if their last meeting had been perfectly delightful to each of them, and this one was to be the same.

Mrs. Lovell's cool demeanor, however, had the effect of checking his advance, and, as before, he stopped and bowed very elaborately.

"Allow me to haf ze honneur to saluter you, madame, an to expresser ze gratification eet geefs me to fin you here. Eet ees an epoch in ze histoire of ze race humaine."

"Will you be kind enough to inform me to what I am indebted for this visit?" asked Mrs. Lovell. "You stated that you had something of importance to speak of."

"Ah — bien — bon — oui — vrai," replied Du Potiron, rapidly. "One moment. I mus congratuler you on your courage. Eet ees sublime, magnifique, colossal, enorme."

"I do not understand you," said Mrs. Lovell, with some show of temper. "You have something more to speak of than this."

"Eh bien. I wish, madame, to know eef I sal haf ze honneur of to see ze charmante Mo — "

"If you mean Miss Heathcote, sir," said Mrs. Lovell, loftily, "I have to

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you."

"Quoi! Grand ciel!" ejaculated Du Potiron. "Declines? Mo! Moi! Mo — la charmante Mo — declines. Madame, zat ees not possible."

"If you have nothing more to say," said Mrs. Lovell, "I shall now excuse myself."

"Mais!" cried Du Potiron. "Mo! — vain sall I see her? Mo — I vish to see Mo."

"You are not to see her at all," said Mrs. Lovell, abruptly.

"Mais, you meestake."

"Not at all. It is you who are mistaken. You do not appear to understand the ordinary usages of society."

"Moi! Ma foi, madame, zees ees incomprehensible. I haf wait too long. I can wait no more. I mus see her some time. She is mine."

"What do you mean by that?"

"She is mine, I say," repeated Du Potiron in quick, energetic tones. "She is my fiancée."

"Your *fiancée?* What nonsense!" cried Mrs. Lovell. "What do you mean? You are not acquainted with her at all."

"Mais, madame, you meestake yourself. She is my fiancée. I haf propose at Montreal. She accept me. I haf ze lettre of acceptance. She write wit affection and empressement. She confess herself charme wit me, an I haf not seen her since. An so, madame, I now haf to wait for her appearance."

"Why, really, this is too absurd," said Mrs. Lovell. "I am aware that you proposed at Montreal when you really had no acquaintance with her, and she had none with you, and also that she declined your proposal."

"Decline? No, no, no," cried Du Potiron. "She accept."

"Accept? O, you allude to that first letter! But that was a mistake; she explained all that."

"First lettaire?" repeated Du Potiron; "meestake? explain? I not comprehend you, madame. I only know zis, zat ze charmante Mo haf accept me, an to prove eet I haf ze lettaire Voilà!"

And with these words he unbuttoned the breast of his coat, and, inserting his hand into the inside pocket, he proceeded to draw forth a letter very solemnly and slowly. This letter he surveyed for a few moments with an air of pensive yet melodramatic devotion, after which he pressed it to his lips. Then he looked at Mrs. Lovell.

"What letter is that?" asked Mrs. Lovell.

"Ze lettaire of Mo, — she accept me. Do you doubt? You sall read."

"O, you mean that first letter. But did n't you get her other explanatory note?"

"Explanation? what explanation? No, madame. Zis ees ze only lettaire I haf receif from ze charmante Mo. Zere ees notin to explain —"

"But that letter was all a mistake," said Mrs. Lovell. "It was never intended for you at all."

Du Potiron smiled.

"Ah, I see," he said, "zat ze charmante Mo haf deceif you, — a ruse. Aha! Eh bien. I inform you now of ze fact."

"Pooh, it's too absurd. Let me see that letter," said Mrs. Lovell, advancing nearer. Du Potiron instinctively drew back his hand, as though he was afraid that she intended to snatch it away, but the action and the fear lasted for an instant only. Then he held out the letter with a polite bow and an air of great magnanimity.

Mrs. Lovell took the letter and read it carelessly. Then she looked at the opening words, and finally at the address on the envelope. After which she said, coolly: "It's rather unfortunate that you never received Miss Heathcote's other note. You left Montreal very suddenly, I think, or you would have certainly got it. The other letter was an explanation of this. For you know this is all an absurd mistake."

"A meestake?" said Du Potiron, with an incredulous smile.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lovell. "My sis-

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for another person."

"Ma foi, madame, you must see zat ees not possible."

"I will soon show you," said Mrs. Lovell; and with these words she directed his attention to the opening words. These words, written in Maud's angular hand, were made up out of letters that were wide-spread, with open loops, and not particularly legible. They were intended to be, "My dear Mr. Carrol." As Mrs. Lovell looked at them now, she saw that they might be read, "My dear M. Count."

"What are those words?" asked Mrs. Lovell, pointing to them. "What do you take them to be?"

Du Potiron looked at them for a moment, and then said, "*My dear Monsieur le Comte.*"

"But it is n't anything of the kind," said Mrs. Lovell.

Du Potiron started, and looked at her uneasily.

"It's *My dear Mr. Carrol,*" said Mrs. Lovell, "and you have been utterly mistaken."

At the mention of this name Du Potiron started back and gave a hurried look around. His old look of easy self-sufficiency passed away altogether, and was succeeded by an air of trouble and apprehension.

"Carrol!" he repeated. "Am I to understand, madame, zat you say zees lettaire was intend for M. Carrol?"

"Certainly; you may see the name there for yourself," said she.

Du Potiron looked at it earnestly for some time, and then looked at Mrs. Lovell.

"Eet ees not possible," said he. "Zees lettaire was for me, and ze charmante Mo ees mine, an sall be mine. Zees Carrol haf notin to do wis her. Moi! I am ze one she wrote ze lettaire. Bien! an now, madame, I haf ze honneur to requess ze plaisir of to see ze charmante Mo."

"Very well, sir," said Mrs. Lovell; "since you refuse to take my explanation, I can only inform you that Miss Heathcote has no acquaintance with at all."

"Mais, madame, I moos see her. I haf come to take her ondaire my protection."

"*Your protection!*" repeated Mrs. Lovell, in amazement at such prolonged and sustained impudence.

"Oui, madame," continued Du Potiron. "Eet ees ver necessaire. You are bot in danger. Eet ees a time of peril. You haf allow yourself to remain here, and not know zat danger. You haf no protector, an eet ees necessaire for me to interpose to save you from ze enemy."

"Danger! enemy! How perfectly absurd!" said Mrs. Lovell.

"Madame," said Du Potiron, "you are in great danger. Paris is surrounde by ze Prusse. Ze siege haf begun. Ze bombardement moos commencer. Ze shells sall fall on zese houses, an zis cety sall become one grand fortification. Zees ees no place for ladies. You should haf fly before; but since you remain, I mus protect you from ze danger zat you encounter."

Mrs. Lovell was certainly startled at this, though she would not confess it.

"Allow me to remark, sir," said she, after a short pause, "that, even if there should be any danger, which I utterly doubt, I should not put myself under *your* protection. I should be content with the protection of the government."

"Ze govairnement?" said Du Potiron; "but ze govairnement ees gone."

"Gone!"

"Yes, to Tours; to escape ze Prusse."

"This is absurd," said Mrs. Lovell, in utter incredulity. "But even if it were true, what of that? There is the British Ambassador."

"Ma foi!" cried Du Potiron. "You seem to be ignorant of everytin, madame. Ees eet possible you don't know zat ze British Ambassador haf run away from ze Prusse, an all ze oder ambassadors aussi?"

At this Mrs. Lovell broke down.

"Monsieur," said she, stiffly, "all this is utterly preposterous. It is use-

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less for me to prolong this interview. I can only say that, if these statements of yours are true, I shall soon find it out, and I shall know what to do, without requiring any assistance from you."

And with these words Mrs. Lovell retired, leaving Du Potiron a prey to various conflicting feelings, prominent among which was a new interest in Maud's letter, which he scrutinized for some time before he departed.

Mrs. Lovell did not go back to Maud at once. Du Potiron's startling information had quite terrified her. She had not the faintest idea of the real state of things, and was fully conscious of her ignorance. Under the circumstances, her first impulse was to find out the truth; and so she went at once to see Madame Guimarin.

She found the good madame very anxious and very agitated. As she heard Mrs. Lovell's questions her agitation increased greatly, and it was some time before she could make any reply. She burst into tears, and sat sobbing convulsively. At last she was able to find words, and told Mrs. Lovell the whole truth. She informed her that her house had been empty for a long time, most of the boarders having fled in order to avoid the troubles that seemed to be ahead. She had received Mrs. Lovell most eagerly, seeing in these two boarders her last hope of escape from utter ruin. She had always put the best appearance upon things, and had never allowed any of the city papers to lie about. Mrs. Lovell would not have read them if she had seen them; but she did not even see them. Maud had caught a glimpse of one or two old ones, but was not able to get at the truth. Thus Madame Guimarin had kept out of her house all indications of danger, and her two new boarders had remained. But the approach of the final catastrophe had overcome Madame Guimarin herself. She saw a long blockade, high prices, scant markets, shops closed, street-fights, mob rule, and a hundred other calamities. Now that she had begun to tell the truth, she poured it all forth without reserve, and Mrs. Lovell at length understood the fullest peril that the most imaginative mind could attach to her present situation.

In spite of the landlady's dark picture, Mrs. Lovell was not without resources. "I will send," she thought, "to Lord Lyons, and get a passport from him, so as to leave the city at once." Upon this resolve she acted as soon as possible. On the return of her messenger she found, to her consternation, that Du Potiron's information was correct, and that the British Ambassador had retired from the city. Thus far she had concealed it all from Maud; but now it was neither judicious nor was it even possible to keep up any further concealment. So she told Maud all, and to her great delight Maud listened to the news without being overwhelmed or even dismayed.

"Really, Maudie dear," cried Mrs. Lovell, in a joyous tone, "this is very, very delightful, to find you take it so. I thought you'd be so upset, that I was afraid to tell you. This is really nice of you, and I admire you no end for your bravery and courage and all that. And do you know, Maudie, for my part, I'm not half so afraid as I ought to be; in fact, I don't know but that I feel just a little bit of a kind of pleasant excitement in our situation. I've always had quite a longing to be in Paris during a revolution. It must be *so* nice. *Coup d'états*, you know, Maudie dear, and all that sort of thing. Such fun! And then, do you know, Maudie, there's another thing that really has a little to do, I think, with my feeling so very free from fear. Do you know, Maudie, I've an idea that poor dear old Mr. Grimes is wandering about these streets somewhere; and, really, the very thought of that great big man gives me a sense of protection and security. Not, of course, that I think of him in any other way than as a possible assistant in case of an emergency, as a last resort; but then what's the use," continued Mrs. Lovell, plaintively, — "what's the use of talking of him as a last resort, when I have n't

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in case of need?"

Maud had no reply to make to these remarks. Her mind was preoccupied, for she was wondering whether Carrol had fled with the rest, or whether he had remained behind to share the fortunes of the besieged city.

XV.

MEETING AND PARTING.

GRIMES and Carrol, as we have seen, made it their sole occupation to saunter about the public places, for the simple reason that this was at once the best and most attractive thing that they could do; and as neither cared about company, each went by himself. On one of these occasions, Carrol set forth on his daily pilgrimage and wandered to the Champs Elysées.

There was almost always a great gathering of people here, but on this occasion the crowd was much larger than usual. A body of soldiers marched along, apparently on their way to the outside of the city, consisting of foot-soldiers and cavalry and artillery. From time to time the stirring strains of some martial air burst forth from a passing band, and the shouts and exclamations of the people arose without ceasing. It seemed to be the impression of the people that these troops were on their way to take part in a *sortie;* and the remarks that from time to time reached Carrol's ears gave that idea to him. He therefore found something of greater interest than usual in the sight of men who were actually on the way to attempt such a serious thing as actual battle with the beleaguering host; and so he wandered about from one place to another, seeking some position from which he could gaze upon the scene to the best advantage.

As he was thus moving about, he came upon the outskirts of a cluster of people, and hesitated for a moment about penetrating it. As he did so he noticed immediately in front of him a thrill through every nerve. Her side face only was turned toward him, and she seemed trying to make her way through the crowd so as to go down the Champs Elysées; but the very first glance that he gave showed him that she was no other than Maud Heathcote herself. He stood motionless with surprise for a few moments, and then, as the lady turned towards the spot where he was standing, he shrank back and hastily concealed himself.

The crowd here made way for Maud, and she passed through, walking so close to Carrol that he could have touched her. But he contrived to conceal himself so effectually that she did not see him, and so she walked on without the slightest idea that he was so near. Carrol watched her closely, and then stole away after her. In order that he might not be observed, he got among some trees, and walked behind them, moving from one to the other in a very stealthy and, it must be confessed, a very absurd manner. It was not at all difficult to do this, for Maud walked very slowly, and at times stopped and looked back. Carrol could easily see by the expression of her face that she was looking for some one, but who that person could be he was at a loss to conjecture. Instantly his suspicious nature was aroused. Now, he thought, was the time to find out the mysterious motive that had kept her here in Paris; and though there was a miserable sense of shame in his mind, yet so great was his jealousy, that he kept up his watchful outlook for some considerable time.

At length Maud went on in a direction where the trees could no longer afford a cover to her jealous watcher. He was compelled, therefore, to venture forth, and this he did as cautiously as possible. There was a crowd in the distance, and toward this Maud walked, and into the midst of this she disappeared. Carrol now hastened in that direction very rapidly, fearing that he might lose her altogether. Maud had gone into the midst of the crowd,

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wish was to reach the other side, she found it necessary to retreat and go around the crowd, or attempt the passage farther on. She accordingly turned, and came back at the very place where she had entered. Now Carrol had just reached the edge of the crowd, and in his anxious desire to catch sight of Maud again he was looking most eagerly forward, when, suddenly, full before him, close in front, so close that further concealment of himself was impossible, with her eyes fixed on his, was Maud herself.

As she caught sight of Carrol a deep flush passed over her face, and then died out, leaving it as pale as death; her eyes fastened themselves on his with a look of wistful entreaty and unutterable sadness; and he could see that tears were trembling upon those long lashes. The sight of that face was piteous enough to have moved most deeply a sterner heart than that of Carrol. Her look flashed through him to his inmost soul, and at once all his hot rage, his venomous bitterness, his hard and cruel jealousy vanished and went into utter oblivion. He broke down completely. He reached out his hand and grasped hers feverishly. For a moment he could not speak, but at length he found his voice.

"Maud!"

"Paul!"

His voice was tremulous and hoarse; her voice was tremulous too and faint. They stood for an instant looking at one another with their hands clasped, forgetful of the crowd around them, and of everything except each other. Maud saw the change in Carrol's face; she marked how pale and wan he had become, the dark circles around his hollow eyes, the sharp, pinched features, the trembling and quivering muscles of the face. The sight of these, combined with her own deep agitation, affected her still more strongly, and at length she burst into tears and sobbed aloud.

Carrol stood there fearfully agitated. produced its natural effect, and had greatly undermined his strength and the steadiness of his nerves. The revulsion which he had just experienced, in passing in one instant from a fierce, headlong desire for vengeance, to the tenderest emotion of love and pity, bewildered his brain. The sight of Maud's sadness had wrought this change, and it was intensified by the sight of Maud's tears. There was a choking sensation in his throat; his heart throbbed wildly; his hand still clutched hers convulsively; and he neither moved nor spoke.

A movement now took place in the crowd, and the people pressed against the two as they stood there. This roused them. Maud gently withdrew her hand, and Carrol regained his presence of mind.

"It 's too crowded," he said, in a low voice; "come away — with me — to some other place."

Maud said nothing, but as he started she walked by his side, and they went away out of the crowd.

"I — I lost my way," said Maud, at length, first breaking the silence. She spoke hurriedly and quickly. The silence embarrassed her so greatly, that to break it in any way was a relief; and so she naturally alluded to the first thing that came uppermost, which was her singular appearance thus alone in the midst of a crowd. "I lost my way," she repeated, "that is, I lost my sister, and I was trying to find her."

"Your sister?" said Carrol, in an absent voice.

"Yes. Georgie, — Mrs. Lovell; we went out together, you know," said Maud, who now seemed to have found her voice. "We generally drive out, but to-day she thought she would like a walk. We did n't know there would be such a crowd. We were walking about here together, when suddenly a great rush of people took place and we were separated. I 've been looking for her for nearly half an hour, but cannot

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her?"

She raised her eyes as she said this, and caught his gaze as it was fixed upon her. It was earnest and longing and sad, and full of a strange meaning. Her own eyes fell before it, and she was silent again.

"I have not seen her," said Carrol, in a dreamy, far-off tone.

They walked on a little farther in silence. Maud waited, thinking that Carrol would first break it, but Carrol made no attempt to speak. His brain was full of a tumult of thoughts, none of which he knew how to put into words. For this moment was sweet to him beyond all expression, but beneath the sweetness there was a dread memory which could not altogether leave him; and it was this that held his tongue fast bound, and checked the words that were rising to his lips.

Again Maud broke the silence which embarrassed her. But this time it was no commonplace that she uttered, but rather the thought that for weeks had been uppermost in her mind. It was a thing that she longed to know. Upon this all her future seemed to depend. So with a great effort she forced herself to speak.

"You never answered my last letter. Did you get it?"

She spoke almost breathlessly, with intense eagerness, not looking at him, but walking by his side with her eyes fixed upon the ground. Her voice was low, but the words were distinct, and every one was audible to her companion. To him those words were not altogether intelligible as to their meaning, but they had reference to her letter, to that letter which had wrought so much woe for him. In a moment a new change came over him, his dark memories rushed to the surface, overpowering the tenderness which had been born from this meeting.

"Your letter?" said he, in a harsh voice. "I answered it. Did n't you get my answer?"

His tone startled her and shocked her. She raised her eyes in terror; and the gaze that he now turned upon her was cold and dark and cruel.

"Oh!" she said, with a low moan of irrepressible grief, "you cannot mean this. You don't know. Did you get my second letter, my letter in which I explained? Did you get that? I explained. It was an awful mistake — the first letter. You did not get my last letter."

Carrol started. He stopped and looked at her. A thought came to him which sent a dark look of anguish over his face.

"Last letter!" said he, "I don't know. I only got one letter, and I answered it. I wrote you a — a farewell. Did you write again? What do you mean by a mistake? Was there a mistake? What mistake? O heaven! tell me what you mean. I never got any other letter. What do you mean by your last letter?"

He spoke eagerly, but his tones expressed the deepest anguish. He was eager to know the truth, but beneath his eager desire was the grim consciousness that it was now too late for any explanation to avail. To find out that she after all was true, to have it all explained, was to him like having heaven opened; but at the same time the consciousness of his dark deed of horror formed an impenetrable barrier that lay between him and that heaven.

All this longing and all this fear showed itself in his face and in his voice; forming a strange mixture, which Maud noticed with wonder and deep apprehension. But for her there was nothing else to do than to exculpate herself, and show her innocence and her truth.

"Paul!" she cried, in a voice that was a wail of anguish, "how could you go without seeing me? How could you take that letter as if it came from me and never come to me, when one word would have explained all? It was all a mistake, — a miserable, miserable mistake. When you wrote to me you must have *known* how I would an-

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wished me to. But in my excitement and agitation I foolishly wrote on the envelope the wrong address. I did so because I happened to be writing a reply to some wretched creature, who sent me a silly note at the same time. In my agitation I wrote the wrong address on each envelope, and you got what was not intended for you. As soon as I received your reply I understood it all, and wrote you at once explaining it, but I never heard from you again. And, O Paul! believe me — I have — suffered — much."

Maud was a proud girl, and all this was a humiliation to her; but she had suffered so much, that she longed to find peace and reconciliation, and so she made this frank explanation. She made it frankly, because she was confident that it would make all things plain, and drive away the last feeling of suspicion and resentment that Carrol might entertain. She stood as she said this, not looking at him, but with her eyes fixed on the ground. A burning flush overspread her face. Her hands clutched one another convulsively. She spoke quickly, and the tones of her voice were tremulous and faint from the deep agitation of her heart. As she ended she could scarcely speak; her last words seemed wrung from her in spite of herself; and when she stopped she waited for a moment, expecting Carrol's answer, and then she slowly raised her eyes to his face. Her eyes were full of tears, and in them there was again that earnest, wistful look which had before been seen in them.

Carrol had heard every word. The few words of explanation had been sufficient to convey to his mind a general, yet a perfectly distinct idea of the nature of Maud's mistake, and to assure him that she had been perfectly true and faithful; that she had hastened to explain her mistake; that she had suffered greatly; and that his miserable jealousy had excited suspicions in his mind against her which not only been thus perfectly true and faithful, but that now at this moment, and here by his side, she stood, herself volunteering this explanation, giving it unasked, and speaking to him words of sweet reconciliation. Thus all the truth burst upon him.

But as the truth thus became known to him, there were manifest to his mind other things which darkened that truth, and shrouded all his hopes in the blackness of darkness. She had explained her mistake fully and frankly, but she did not know how terrible, how fatal that mistake had been. As she stood there in her innocent trust, seeking reconciliation, her very words of explanation showed that she was utterly ignorant of the terrible crime which had been the result of this mistake. She evidently thought him as pure and as unstained as he had been when they had last spoken together. She could not have heard of the murder. She could not know what he was now. She thought that nothing lay between them but a misunderstanding that a word could remove; she did not know that between them there yawned an abyss which must separate them forever. Soon she must know all, and then she would understand; but now — but now —

A thousand thoughts like these rushed through Carrol's mind as he stood there. He did not venture to look at Maud. As she raised her tearful eyes timidly and wistfully to his face, this was what she saw. She saw Carrol standing with averted face, his brow drawn together in a dark and gloomy frown, his lips compressed, and his eyes staring far away into empty space. On that face there was not the faintest approach to anything like a relenting of that harsh and resentful temper which he had manifested ever since their misunderstanding; not the slightest sign of anything like an acquiescence in her explanation, of a readiness to receive it, or a tendency to meet her half-way and resume the old intimacy.

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Maud's heart seemed to turn to stone as she gazed; and at once there arose within her a bitter sense of wrong and injury; her whole soul roused itself in strong resentment against such abominable treatment, and all the pride of her nature started up in fierce recoil proportionate to the degree in which she had just humiliated herself. She said not a word; she turned, and without another look walked quickly away.

Of Carrol she had now only one thought as she thus walked away from him, and that was the thought of a pride on his part so obstinate as to be utterly irremovable; a pride obdurate, implacable, and utterly devilish; a nature cold, selfish, and altogether devoid of human feeling; a foolish yet frantic self-esteem, which preferred continuance in a wrong course to a candid and frank change of opinion, even though such a course should lead to the shipwreck of a life, to the misery of himself and others. To her Carrol was obdurate beyond all hope of change. But it was not sorrow or melancholy that filled her heart as she left him. Her whole soul swelled with the most intense indignation against him for subjecting her so wantonly to such cruel injustice.

Meanwhile Carrol stood half frantic with the emotions that filled his heart and the thoughts that rushed through his brain. He did not see Maud leave him, nor did he hear her as she moved away; for his sight and hearing were dulled through the deep abstraction into which his feelings had plunged him. But at length he came to himself. He then saw, to his amazement, that he was alone. He could scarcely believe it. He looked all around. Crowds of people appeared assembled together not far away, — men, women, and children, — but where was Maud?

He looked all around, wildly, and full of consternation. Every word that she had spoken was still fresh in his memory. He knew that he had given no answer to her. He saw that she had after looking in all directions, he started off to search after her.

But Maud had already disappeared in the crowd, and was walking toward her lodgings. As for Carrol, he searched after her all that day, never ceasing to reproach and curse himself for his folly; but the day passed, and evening came, and Maud appeared no more.

XVI.

AN IRRESISTIBLE APPEAL.

On the same eventful day on which Carrol met with Maud, Grimes also happened to be in the Champs Elysées. He had made his daily effort upon Trochu and the American Minister, but in each case the *queue* had again baffled him. Sauntering away, he had drifted up the Champs Elysées, and, as he had nothing better to do, on reaching the Arc de l'Étoile he turned and allowed himself to drift down again.

Though he had been subject to a fresh disappointment, he was not at all depressed in his mind, but his broad face exhibited an expression of serenity that showed a mind at peace within. There was something in the scene which was pleasant in his eyes. His thoughts were stimulated by the sight of the marching warriors. He saw the invincible legions of republican France going forth at last to victory. He longed to make one among them. Every beat of the drum, every blare of the bugle, every tramp of the measured footfall, seemed a summons for him to come and join these ranks.

He was so absorbed that he sauntered on quite oblivious of the scene around him, he was suddenly roused by an exclamation, and the sound of his own name uttered in a lady's voice. He started and stared.

"Why, Mr. Grimes! How very, very odd, but how really nice and fortunate!"

And Mrs. Lovell, for it was she who thus encountered him, held forth, with

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Grimes at once grasped and crushed; while at the same instant, as though the touch of that hand was magical, every thought of Trochu, and the French Republic, vanished from his mind.

"Wal!" exclaimed Grimes. And upon saying that he relapsed into a silence which, under the circumstances, may perhaps have been more eloquent than words.

"It 's *so* absurd," said Mrs. Lovell, withdrawing her hand, not without some effort. "You know, I 've really lost my way; and poor Maudie! I 'm so dreadfully anxious about her. We were separated by a great crowd, and I 've been looking for her everywhere. I 'm really quite wild with anxiety, for I 'm sure she can never, never find her way home. And do you think that anything could happen to her, and is n't it a shame, Mr. Grimes?"

To this Grimes made no reply, but stood gazing at her with a smile of almost parental indulgence and fondness.

"You see, she does n't know her way about Paris at all; and have n't you seen her somewhere? I thought perhaps I might find her up this way."

Grimes shook his head, without attempting to say anything as yet.

"I 'm so dreadfully anxious, and I 'm so wretchedly tired," continued Mrs. Lovell. "I 've been looking for her everywhere; and I was just going to sit down and rest, when I met you. And don't you think, now, it would be just as well for me to sit down for a little while, Mr. Grimes? Might n't she find me more easily in that way, now? And could n't you find some seat for me, Mr. Grimes, where I could have a good view of the place, and see her if she came anywhere near?"

"Most certainly, ma'am," said Grimes, quickly. "I 'll be perfectly delighted, I assure you. I hain't the slightest doubt that that 's the best way to find her. Why, 't aint any use to hunt her up in this crowd, no more 'n a needle in a haystack."

such thing as that," said Mrs. Lovell.

Grimes now led the way out of the crowd to a seat on one side of the avenue, under the trees, in a place from which an extensive view could be commanded up and down. Here Mrs. Lovell seated herself with, "O thanks, very much; it 's really *so* good of you, Mr. Grimes"; while Grimes placed himself by her side.

"Wal," said he, after a pause, in a confidential and friendly tone, "and *how* are you to-day? Pooty well?"

"O, very well, thanks," said Mrs. Lovell, with a smile.

Grimes paused, and looked solemnly at the ground for a few moments.

"Fine weather we 're havin' to-day," said he at length.

"Is n't it perfectly exquisite?" said Mrs. Lovell.

"Fine place, Paris," continued Grimes, cheerily.

"Delightful," said Mrs. Lovell. "Do you know it 's my favorite place, that is, generally; of course, just now it 's a little different."

"Fine people the French," said Grimes.

"Yes; I always liked them very much; they are perfectly charming. And how very funny it was that I should meet you here. It 's really so nice, and so very, very providential, you know. Why, I was just beginning to despair."

Grimes heaved a heavy sigh, and meditated solemnly for a little while.

"Is this your first visit to Paris?" he asked at length, with an air of anxiety.

"O no," said Mrs. Lovell. "I was here once or twice before; and I liked it so very, very much, that I thought I should enjoy it now."

"I find, ma'am," said Grimes, "that you did n't get scared at the siege. You hung on, I see. 'T aint everybody that 'd do like that. That 's what I call pure spunk. And I tell you what it is, I did n't think you 'd 'a' done it. Most women are such cowards."

"O, but *I* 'm a coward, too," said

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you know. There was no regular notice of it given. Nobody told me anything about it. I never was so surprised in my life. There ought to have been some regular public notice; now ought n't there, Mr. Grimes?"

"Wal," said Grimes, "that's queer. It strikes me there was a good deal about it in the papers."

"O yes; but then, you know, I never read the papers. One never can believe the half of what they say. They always contradict themselves the next day. And then they always say such extravagant things. Really, you know, if one went by what the papers say, one could never expect to have any peace at all."

"Wal," said Grimes, "I must say I do admire your style. I've often heard the papers pitched into; but people that abuse them always follow their lead, nevertheless. But you're the very first person I ever met with that deliberately ignored them, and not only despised them, but acted up to it."

Mrs. Lovell took no notice of this, but looked earnestly at Grimes as he was speaking; and when he had ceased, she said, "I wonder why you remained, if you knew there was going to be a siege."

"Me?" said Grimes. "O, I'm goin' to enlist in the French army."

"O, how lovely!" cried Mrs. Lovell, in an animated tone; "how nice, and chivalrous, and all that! Do you know I've always perfectly adored the army? and to think of your being an officer! Only fancy! The idea!"

And Mrs. Lovell fastened her eyes upon space with an expression of wonder beyond words that was exceedingly becoming to her particular style of beauty.

"Yes, 'm," said Grimes seriously and with very creditable self-poise, "I quite agree with you there. It's what you might consider a high and holy callin' just now in these times, when there is a regular epoch, a moment, of — of — the principles of — of — seventy-six, and the Republic arises great, glorious, and free. And so it's the proud privilege of every man that can wield a sword to strike a blow for the cause of freedom, — and so forth."

"How very, very true," said Mrs. Lovell; "and do you know, Mr. Grimes, I don't think I ever knew anything half so funny as the way you and I meet. Only fancy! First there was Niagara, then Montreal, then, you know, we met so absurdly on board the steamer, and now we have met again in the most unaccountable way in the middle of a besieged city. Really, it's the most wonderful thing. But I suppose you don't think anything of meeting with poor me, now that you are a great French general, Mr. Grimes."

Grimes had already experienced a little of Mrs. Lovell's tendency to an abrupt transition from one subject of conversation to another, but this one bewildered him a little by its suddenness. The hint which she made as to his possible indifference was not, however unpleasant, and more than this it very naturally roused him to a manly denial of any such imputation.

"No, 'm," said he steadily, shaking his head at the same time with a very solemn emphasis. "That ain't my style. I don't forget so easy. When I get a thing I always cling to it. The circumstance that led to our acquaintance at Niagara, 'm, still remains with me here at Paris."

"The — the circumstance?" asked Mrs. Lovell, doubtfully.

"Yes, 'm."

"What a funny thing to call it a circumstance," said Mrs. Lovell, with a light laugh. "And have you really brought that absurd chignon here with you? Only fancy!"

"Wal," said Grimes, in a tone of candor, "when I said circumstance I meant incident, but as to the other — the apparatus — I'm free to say I have it still — in my trunk — in this town."

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way across the ocean?"

"Yes, 'm."

"How very funny!" sighed Mrs. Lovell; and then after a pause she added, in a low voice, "I don't see why, I 'm sure."

Grimes looked at her earnestly, a slight flush passed over his face, his lips parted to utter words which rested there; but he checked himself, and the words remained unspoken. Mrs. Lovell waited patiently, looking at the ground with a sweet air of meek expectation.

"Wal," said Grimes at last, "you see it was a kind of reminder of what I once wanted — and did n't get."

Mrs. Lovell gave a very little bit of a sigh.

"I 'm sure I don't see the use of being so awfully despondent," said she.

Grimes looked at her eagerly and earnestly. Mrs. Lovell looked at the ground. Grimes had a sudden idea that there might still be hope for him in this quarter, and the words were already on his lips which this idea impelled. But again he checked himself. It was his innate modesty and self-depreciation that stopped his utterance. No, he thought, she don't mean that; she is only speakin' of despondency in general, and she 's quite right. So Grimes said, "Wal, 'm, I 'm not that kind. I like one person, and no other. It ain't the most comfortable nature to have, but a fellow can't help his disposition. For my part, I 'm a man of one idea, — always was, am now, and ever shall be. I 'm a fellow of one feelin' too, I suppose, and so I find if I once get hankerin' after anybody, why, there I am, and I can't get over it. There ain't any use in it, as you say, course, but what can a fellow do if he can't help it?"

At this Mrs. Lovell again gave a little sigh.

"Yes," said she, "that 's just the way it is with me; and I think it 's awfully nice."

Grimes slowly took this observation over therein. It seemed to him at length to be a very gentle reminder, offered by Mrs. Lovell to him, that she was a widow, and was still brooding over her lost love, to which she still persisted in clinging with unchangeable constancy. He accepted it as a kind of rebuke, and in the simple honesty of his heart he found something in such rare constancy which was at once admirable, delicate, pure, holy, touching, affecting, pathetic, tender, and true. "It 's rather rough on me," thought honest Grimes, "but, after all, it comes up to my idea of a high-toned woman." He now felt afraid that he had gone too far in talking about his own feelings. He had perhaps offended her, and she had sought out this delicate way of administering a rebuke. He felt anxious to make amends for his error. He felt that an apology would only make matters worse; and so he sought rather to make an ample atonement by introducing some new subject which should at once be most agreeable to her, and at the same time be suggestive of his own penitence. To him there seemed to be only one subject which could fulfil these conditions, and that was the memory of the one to whom she had just professed, as he supposed, such undying constancy.

"I suppose now," said Grimes, with that heavy sigh, and that deep dolefulness of tone which are often employed by clergymen in condoling with the afflicted or the bereaved, — "I suppose now — that is, I dare say you thought a good deal of him."

Mrs. Lovell at this looked up a little puzzled. But she supposed that this was a remark put forth by Grimes to sound her as to her state of mind with reference to himself. So a slight blush passed over her face, and she sighed gently, "I suppose so."

"Liked to have him around?" continued Grimes in the same austerely dismal voice.

"Yes," sighed Mrs. Lovell.

"Missed him — most tremendously now?"

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and emphatically, as though words were incapable of expressing the extent to which she had missed him.

"Die for him, course," wailed Grimes, as his voice grew dismaller and dolefuller.

"I suppose so," said Mrs. Lovell, after a pause in which she began to think that Grimes was making her commit herself altogether too much, but at the same time felt an undiminished desire to rouse him from his evident despondency to a healthier state of mind.

"Loss irreparable?" said Grimes, with a groan.

"Well — yes — that is," added Mrs. Lovell, "to lose him altogether, you know."

Grimes gave another groan. If anything had been needed to convince him of the utter futility of the hopes that he had once cherished it was this, — this touching confession of love stronger than death, — this declaration of a woman's truth and constancy. A new despair came to his own heart, but in the midst of his despair he honored her for such feelings. At length he roused himself and made a final effort.

"Fine man, — I s'pose, — this Mr. Lovell?"

That is what Grimes said. It was an outburst of frank generosity. He was boiling over with jealous hate of this Lovell, but in his tender regard for Mrs. Lovell he subdued his jealousy and his hate, subdued himself, and rose to a display of his better nature. "Fine man, — I s'pose, — this Mr. Lovell?"

At this Mrs. Lovell started as though she had been shot. She stared at Grimes in amazement, utterly unable to understand what he could possibly mean.

"Mr. — Lovell?" she faltered at length. "What do you mean? I don't understand you."

"Why," said Grimes in equal amazement, "we 've been talkin' about him all along, have n't we? You said your you 'd die for him."

"I was n't talking about *him* at all," said Mrs. Lovell, rising to her feet. "And I 'm awfully anxious about poor Maudie. I have n't seen her yet at all. Have you, Mr. Grimes? And I 'm sure, I 've been looking all over that crowd ever since I sat down here. You have n't seen her, have you, Mr. Grimes? You did n't notice her, did you, Mr. Grimes?"

"No," said Grimes, who had risen to his feet in a dazed way, — "no, I — I have n't."

"I think I ought to go home. She will probably be there; I 'm so awfully anxious about her."

With these words Mrs. Lovell walked away, and Grimes walked away with her. He felt confused, bewildered, and confounded. The discovery that Mrs. Lovell had not been yearning over the dear departed had set his brain in a whirl. Who was the happy man for whom she felt such an attachment? He was too modest to think of himself after what had passed. Was there any other person? If so, who was he? Where did he live? Why should Mrs. Lovell be here in Paris? What did it all mean? All these thoughts served to throw him into such a state of confusion that he could scarcely find any words to say.

Out of this confusion, however, he was at length drawn by Mrs. Lovell herself. She at first had felt excessively vexed at the blunder that she had made, but her good-nature at length chased away her vexation; and besides, she had matters of importance about which she wished to speak. This was her present position in Paris, exposed to the insults of Du Potiron. She had defied him, and smiled at his threats; but in spite of all this she could not help feeling some uneasiness, and she was longing to have the interposition of some one whom she could trust. Now Grimes was the very man for this purpose and the only man.

So as they walked along she told Grimes exactly how it happened that

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courage was now exchanged for a more tender sentiment of pity for beauty in distress. The distress also was not trivial or ordinary. She explained to him the more peculiar difficulties of her situation, as well as those general ones which were natural to all who were shut up in the city. She did not mention Du Potiron, for she thought that the mention of his name would be of no service, and would only lead to long and troublesome explanations, involving Maud's private affairs. This she considered quite unnecessary. She confined herself simply to generalities. She expressed a great fear of internal difficulties in Paris, alluded in strong language to the chronic panic of Madame Guimarin, and the dangers of a revolution. The terror which she felt about the Reds seemed to Grimes to be very natural under the circumstances. In that danger he fully believed. Amid all his enthusiasm about the French Republic, he was well aware of the existence of a fanatical and bloodthirsty element in Paris, composed of people with whom the word "republic" meant little else than universal anarchy and bloodshed. Though he himself had no personal fears about the Red Republic, yet he knew that an unprotected lady had every reason for fear, and he was full of fear on her account.

And so it was that Mrs. Lovell's pathetic appeal elicited from Grimes a rejoinder so full of earnest sympathy and zealous devotion that she had nothing more to desire. She informed him plainly that her one and only wish was to escape from Paris. Inside the city she would never feel safe. Safety seemed to her to be outside. To this Grimes responded by a solemn promise that he would effect her escape in some way or other.

Grimes walked with Mrs. Lovell back to her lodgings, and left her there. When Mrs. Lovell reached her rooms she found Maud there already. If she had not been so much excited, she would have noticed that Maud was presented a strong contrast to the dull depression which had characterized her manner for the last few weeks.

XVII.

A DESPERATE PROJECT.

For the remainder of that day Grimes wandered about, his mind filled with novel yet by no means unpleasant thoughts. His meeting with Mrs. Lovell had produced a very strong effect upon his thoughts, giving them a tendency altogether different from what they had before, and driving away from his mind all ideas of a general nature. He no longer thought of the French Republic, or of the sublime resurrection of a dead and buried cause; he no longer exhausted his ingenuity in the endeavor to find some way in which he could assist the arms of struggling France; but, on the contrary, he saw before him something more tangible than an ideal republic. Instead of the symbolical figure of Liberty, he saw the real form and face of Mrs. Lovell asking with anxious look and audible words for his assistance.

She wanted his help. Yet what help could he give her? This was the problem that now occupied his thoughts. She wanted to escape from Paris, and how could he assist her to accomplish this? He knew very well that the place was "straitly shut up," and that no one could either enter or depart through that living wall which the enemy maintained around the beleaguered city. The notice of the approach of the enemy had been frequent and alarming, and the warning of the coming doom had been sufficient to drive away all who were in a position to leave. Almost all foreigners had long since left. A few had remained out of hardihood; but there were none except Mrs. Lovell who had remained on account of ignorance. The discovery of the real cause of her stay, though it put an end to the admiration which he had

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her.

Yet how could he help her in her desire to escape? This was the problem that took up all his thoughts; and it proved to be a problem which was by no means easy of solution. In this state of mind he returned to his lodgings.

He found Carrol there, gloomy, meditative, and reticent. In such a mood Carrol did not seem to be at all fitted to become a confidant of the thoughts that were troubling the mind of Grimes, and so Grimes did not feel inclined to make any mention to him of the events of the day. To Grimes it seemed that the slightest allusion to the ladies would only madden his friend, and bring on the usual tirade against all women in general, and against Maud Heathcote in particular. If he had come to any conclusion, or made up his mind to any particular plan of action, he might possibly have sought the co-operation of Carrol; but as it was he was all at sea, and had not as yet settled upon anything. The consequence was that he simply held his tongue, and allowed himself to sink into his own meditations. On the other hand, Carrol's thoughts were certainly not of such a character as he would feel inclined to communicate to any friend, however intimate. He was on this occasion overwhelmed with self-reproach for his treatment of Maud. He had met with her, he had listened to her, and he had not only not replied, but he had allowed her to leave him without being conscious of her departure. The remembrance of this made him utterly miserable; and the misery which he felt was of such a nature that he could not hope for sympathy from others, since he could not even find excuse for himself.

Grimes meditated most earnestly over his problem for hours, until at last he fell asleep; and so intense were his meditations that they did not cease even then, but accompanied him. These dreams did not accomplish anything, all the more intently upon that one idea which had taken possession of it, and so much so that, on the following morn, it was just the same to him as though he had been wide awake all through the night.

On that day he made a final assault upon the American Minister. Fortunately for him there was a tremendous rain-storm. Now it happens that though the people on the continent of Europe can endure many evils, there is one thing that they cannot endure, and that is a thorough soaking. The terrors of rain have never been successfully encountered by any continental people. To the Anglo-Saxon race alone must the credit be given of a struggle with rain and victory over it. To them must be credited the umbrella, the mackintosh, the waterproof, and the india-rubber coat. These Anglo-Saxon inventions are still comparatively unknown to the benighted nations of the Continent, who still show a craven fear of rain, and, instead of boldly encountering it, shrink into the shelter of their houses at the slightest approach of a shower; and so it was that Grimes found the *queue* dwindled to nothingness, and at last a way opened for him to the ear of the American Minister.

The ambassador sent forth by the majority of the nations of the earth generally has nothing whatever to do; and his office is purely ornamental, being used as a brilliant reward for distinguished political merit. He is a luminary that reflects the lustre of his native country, and his only duty is to shine as bright as he can. The one exception to this is the American Ambassador. He has to do everything. He has to be guide, philosopher, and friend to the multitudinous American traveller. He has to supply him with passes to all manner of places, to shake hands with him, to listen to him, to warn, to rebuke, to instruct, to be instant in season and out of season. But of all the American Ambassadors that have ever lived, it may safely be said that not one

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known to the man who represented his country in Paris during the siege. For on that particular occasion the American eagle offered to gather the deserted chickens of all nations under her wings, and Minister Washburne it was who had to officiate as representative of the benevolent bird.

Grimes was able to make a statement of his case in the most effective manner. His errand now was totally different from what it would have been on a former occasion. Then he sought the Minister's aid for himself; now he sought it for the ladies. His former errand would also have been more successful, for then he merely wished to fight, but now his wish was to run away.

The Minister's answer at once chased away all the bright hopes in which Grimes had been indulging, and exhibited to him the utter desperation of his case. There was no such thing as escape possible to any one in the city, no matter what nation they might belong to. The Prussian rules were too stringent to be set aside for any human being whatever; nor was there any influence sufficiently potent to relax the rigor of those rules.

Of course, after such information as this, Grimes had nothing whatever to say. It was clearly a case in which there was no opportunity to make use of any argument or any persuasion. Paris was as entirely isolated from the world as though it had been an island in the midst of the ocean, unvisited by ships and unknown to man.

This is about what the Minister remarked to Grimes, and at the same time he alluded to the fact that the only communication with the world outside had been contrived by the ingenuity of the Parisians; and those who were sufficiently desperate might now try the air and fly away in a balloon.

The suggestion was made in a general way, but the mention of balloons sank deep into the mind of Grimes and attracted all his thoughts at once. He away through the crowded streets he lost himself in speculations as to the feasibility of such a plan.

A balloon!

Flight in a balloon!

At first the idea was certainly startling, in fact quite preposterous. But a second thought made it much less so, and a third and a fourth made it seem rather promising.

A balloon? Why not? It was certainly an easy mode of travelling. No jolts, no plungings and rollings; no alternations of rapidity and slowness, but all calm, smooth, yea, even luxurious.

And the management. Simple? Why, no mode of travelling could possibly equal it in this respect. All one had to do was to pull the valve-rope to bring the balloon down to the earth, and throw out ballast to raise it to the skies.

As to undertaking the management of the untried machine, Grimes had no doubts whatever about his capacity. For that matter he felt himself fully equal to any undertaking, however strange or unfamiliar. He felt within his soul a consciousness that he could manage a balloon, just as he felt the same consciousness that he could edit a paper, or preach a sermon, or command an army. "Yes," said Grimes proudly to himself. "Put me in a balloon, and I 'll run it with any professional in all the blue ethereal sky."

In fact the more he thought of this the more fascinating did the idea become, and at length it seemed to him not only a practicable mode of escape from Paris, but the easiest, safest, pleasantest, and most delightful mode of travelling that was ever devised. There was only one objection that could possibly be urged even by the most timid, and that was the notorious fact that the balloon could not be guided, but was at the mercy of the wind. But to Grimes this did not seem any disadvantage whatever. It might be taken, he thought, as an objection

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of travelling where the traveller wished to reach some definite place; but to him, where his only desire was to escape from this one point, and where destination was a matter of indifference, this formed no objection whatever. Not the slightest difference could it make to him where the wind might carry him, whether east, west, north, or south. One thing, of course, he saw to be desirable, and that was not to start in a gale of wind. "In any ordinary blow," he thought, "I 'm at home, and I 'm ready to soar aloft to the everlasting stars."

Over such thoughts as these he finally grew greatly excited, and determined at once to make inquiries about balloons. Already they had become an article of necessity to the Parisian world, and at regular intervals they were sent forth bearing messages or passengers to the world without. Already Gambetta had made his flight, and dropped from the skies in the midst of astonished France to take up the *rôle* of heaven-descended monster.

What Gambetta has done, Grimes can do.

Such was the general conclusion which summed up the workings of the Grimesian brain. He had no difficulty in finding out the locality of the Balloon Depot, and in course of time he reached the place and stood in the presence of Monsieur Nadar.

The establishment was an extensive one. The exigencies of the siege had created a demand for balloons as the one great necessity of Paris, and every aeronaut had flung himself into the business. Prominent among these were Messieurs Nadar and Godard, both of whom were eminent in this celestial profession. Although the radical deficiencies of the balloon as a means of travel can never be remedied, yet much had been done by these gentlemen to make the balloon itself as efficient as it is possible for a mere balloon to be. A new material had been invented, consisting of cotton cloth saturated formed a substance that was quite air-tight and at the same time far cheaper than the silk which had formerly been used, as well as stronger. Thus a better balloon was now made at a very much lower price than formerly. Other improvements had also been made in the netting, in the valve-rope and valve, and in the material used for ballast. Its structure was now simple enough to be understood by a child.

M. Nadar informed Grimes that the weather had been unsuitable for some days past, and that none had left the city, but he hoped after this rain there would be one or two quiet days. He had several balloons ready, which he could prepare on short notice. Grimes asked him his opinion as to the possibility of his managing a balloon himself; not that he doubted it himself, but he was naturally desirous to see what another person might think. To his great delight, Nadar informed him that the mere management of a balloon was very simple, the chief requisite being presence of mind and cool courage.

None of the balloons which were ready could carry as many as four, nor did Grimes feel particularly anxious to take the whole party. He felt confident that he could manage the balloon if he had only one other passenger, — Mrs. Lovell, for instance. As to Miss Heathcote, he felt that it would be safer for her, as well as pleasanter for him, if she went in another balloon. He thought that Carrol might go with her. At the same time he did not think that Carrol would be capable of managing a balloon himself; and so he proposed to engage an aeronaut to navigate the other one. Thus everything, as he thought, would be fair and respectable, and safe and pleasant, and they could arrange a common rendezvous, where they could all meet again in a general reunion, and congratulate one another over their escape.

It was a plan which seemed to him to be so pleasant in every respect and from every point of view, that his whole

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execution. His last interview with Mrs. Lovell had produced a very strong and very peculiar effect upon him. Her allusions about constancy were not made with reference to her first husband, and he was too modest to venture to appropriate them to himself; but still, though they were not altogether intelligible, they were suggestive of very pleasant possibilities.

There were two difficulties, however, in the way of his plan, which might prevent its accomplishment. The first was, the possible unwillingness of Mrs. Lovell to make such a journey. The other was, the possible refusal of Carrol to have anything to do with Maud. Each of these difficulties would have to be encountered. As to the first, he trusted very much to his own powers of persuasion. He felt that Mrs. Lovell's prejudices against ballooning were merely idle fears which could be readily dissipated, if he only should explain to her how simple, pleasant, safe, agreeable, and delightful that mode of travelling was, and if he could only induce her to put implicit confidence in him. As to Carrol, he hoped to be able to persuade him also; but as yet he did not bestow much thought upon him. The great difficulty he rightly felt would be to persuade Mrs. Lovell. Strangely enough, in all this he never thought of any difficulty on the part of Maud. This arose from the fact that he was so in the habit of identifying her with her sister, that if Mrs. Lovell should only consent to go, it seemed to him to follow, as a matter of course, that Maud would go with her.

XVIII.

A TERRIBLE PROPOSAL.

Of course such a plan as the one which Grimes had been thus revolving from his profound meditations could not be kept secret from one who was to play so important a part in it as Carrol; and to tell him the plan meant a general narration of meeting with Mrs. Lovell, and her appeal to him for help There was a strong repugnance in the breast of Grimes against any such disclosure, and his native delicacy revolted against breathing into another ear the story of his reviving tenderness; but it had to be done. After a faint attempt to discuss the subject in a commonplace manner, he gave it up and launched forth into an enthusiastic description of Mrs. Lovell's candor, her gentleness, her beauty, and her trustful disposition, from which Carrol was able to gather a very correct idea of the state of mind into which his friend had passed. But all this was of far inferior interest to Carrol compared with the one striking fact that Grimes had accompanied Mrs. Lovell to her lodgings, that he knew her address, and that the clew to Maud which he had thought lost was once more recovered. He asked eagerly after their address, and Grimes told him; after which he relapsed into his former silence.

Grimes looked at him attentively for a few moments, and then exclaimed in a cordial tone of approbation, "Wal now, I must say I like that. That has the right ring. You talk like a man. I was afraid that the very mention of the ladies would act on you like a red rag on a bull. But you take the mention calmly, and even show a gentlemanly interest in them. Carrol, my boy, by those words, you 've taken a tremendous load off my mind, and saved me about ten hours of solid talk. So you 're all right, are you? If so, I say, three cheers."

"O well," said Carrol, "the fact is, I begin to think I was unjust to — to her — and that there was — a — a mistake — "

He would have said more, for he now felt keenly how ungenerous and how base his suspicions had been, and he also felt most profoundly the perfect truth and constancy of Maud. Yet he could not tell any more than this, certainly not to Grimes; so he held his tongue.

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I don't care how, so long as you've come. And now I want to tell you about a plan I've been concocting for the escape of the ladies from this prison. They're frightened, no doubt. They want to get away, ere it be eternally too late; and as they've appealed to me, why it stands to reason that I must be up and doin', and help them somehow, and for that matter so must you. You acknowledge that yourself, don't you?"

"Yes," said Carrol.

"Wal," said Grimes, "ordinary means of escape are of no use at all. Paris is a bottle corked up tight. You can't get out nohow, that is by any common way; you've got to try somethin' extraordinary. You're aware, perhaps, that no human being can pass from this village to the world outside, or come from that world to us. For between us and them there is a great gulf fixed. Are you aware of that?"

"Of course! Everybody knows that Paris is blockaded perfectly, and has been for no end of a time."

"Wal, there again you excite my gratitude, for you save me from a two or three hours' talk in the way of explanation. And now let me ask you this. You know there is one way of escape, don't you?"

"One way?" asked Carrol, doubtfully.

"Yes, by doin' the American eagle, and soarin' aloft to the everlastin' stars; in plain language, by takin' to a balloon *à la* Gambetta."

"A balloon!" exclaimed Carrol, in amazement, — "a balloon!"

"Yes," said Grimes. "And now I want to ask you one question. Are you man enough to try it?"

"Good heavens, man alive!" cried Carrol; "what are you talking about? Do you mean to say that the ladies will be willing to go in a balloon?"

"Wal, I don't know yet, for I hain't mentioned the subject to them; but Mrs. Lovell's remarks indicated a n't wonder a bit if I might succeed in persuadin' her to trust herself to the unfathomable tracts of ether. O, could I fly, I'd fly with thee! as the poet says. But never mind what the poet says; what I want to know is, will you go? Will you take Miss Heathcote in one balloon, together with an aerial navigator, while I take Mrs. Lovell in my own personal, particular, and individual car?"

"I? why, of course," said Carrol; "but then, how under heaven do you expect ever to get the ladies to consent to such a journey?"

Upon this Grimes began to explain to Carrol the grounds of his hope, and the plan that he had made, and the way in which he expected to carry it out, and many other things which are unnecessary to report just here.

This conversation with Grimes lasted far into the night, and gave to Carrol the material for agitated thought during the wakeful hours that intervened till morning. The knowledge of Maud's whereabouts opened up to him once more the chance of communicating with her; and now that he was aware of the truth of the case, now that he had seen her tearful eyes, her pleading face, and her tremulous lips, since he had heard her low, sweet voice, as she told her simple and touching story, there had arisen in his heart a strong yearning after her which was intolerable and irresistible. Should he yield to his feelings? Should he seek her out?

"But, alas!" he thought, "why should I go? and for what end, and with what hope? She can never be mine. She does not know it, but there lies between us an unfathomable gulf, over which we cannot pass to join each other. I am a murderer! She will know all some day, soon enough too. Can I go to tell her that? Impossible. Can I go carrying with me this secret? I cannot. I can neither keep my secret in the presence of her pleading eyes, nor have I the heart to tell her that

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a blight over her young life. She will learn it all herself, and then she will understand me and do me justice. As to this flight, if she is willing to go, I shall rejoice to go with her, and trust myself to circumstances. But till then I must struggle against my desires and keep away from her."

Grimes was naturally prompt, and so on the following day he set forth to call on Mrs. Lovell. He had been somewhat troubled in his mind as to the propriety of mentioning Carrol's name. With him it was a difficult question. For Grimes, it must be remembered, had only heard Carrol's first account of his rejection by Maud. Carrol's long tirades against her had deepened the impression which that story had produced, and he very naturally concluded that the rejection of Carrol's proposal had been done by Maud quite deliberately and seriously. He was aware of Carrol's love for her, he remembered the bitterness of his grief over his rejection, and he knew how unfortunate the consequences had been for his friend in many ways. He never had been able to sympathize with Carrol's harsher views of her motives and her character; but some impression had been made upon him by denunciations so persistent; and he had come to feel as much dislike for Maud as it was possible for a chivalrous man to entertain towards a beautiful girl. His idea was that Maud had flirted with Carrol, and had encouraged him without any intentions of accepting him; and as her own affections had not been enlisted, she had not made sufficient allowance for him. He thought her nature was somewhat cold and callous, and that her rejection of Carrol was owing rather to indifference or to vanity than to anything like downright cruelty.

With such views of Maud's character, he naturally concluded that Carrol would not be a very agreeable companion to her; and, except in a very great emergency, he supposed that she would refuse to go with him altogether. Now little plan, and he was anxious that nothing should be added to the ordinary unpleasantness of a balloon voyage to make it more disagreeable than it was in itself. And so Mr. Grimes very sagely concluded that it would be best not to mention Carrol's name at all, but to allude to him merely as "a friend." He thought that if Carrol could only be with Maud under unusual and somewhat serious circumstances, her hard and callous heart might possibly be softened and she might relent.

On seeing him, Mrs. Lovell's face lighted up with a glow of genuine pleasure, and she greeted him with a cordiality that was very flattering indeed.

"Wal," said Grimes, "and how are you? Pooty well?"

"O thanks; but how very, very good this is of you," said Mrs Lovell; "and so thoughtful, too, you know. I was afraid you 'd forget all about me."

And with these words she seated herself, while Grimes did the same, looking at her admiringly all the time.

"Fine weather we 're havin' to-day," said he, "especially after the rain yesterday."

"It really is quite delightful," said Mrs. Lovell, "though I have not been out yet."

"But it did rain tremendous yesterday, did n't it now!" persisted Grimes, who had a distressing way of prosing about the weather, when Mrs. Lovell was crazy to have him talk of other things.

"O yes, I dare say," said she; "but have you heard yet of any way of getting away from this dreadful place? I 'm really very, very anxious, do you know. It 's very silly, but really one can't help being a coward, and I 'm sure there 's every reason to be alarmed. Why, I heard guns yesterday, — positively guns. But that 's not the worst."

"Wal," said Grimes, "that 's the very thing I 've come for; that is, next to havin' the pleasure of seein' you, and — and — "

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red.

"O, how good of you!" said Mrs. Lovell. "And have you heard of anything?"

"Yes, 'm," said Grimes. "I have."

"O, what is it?" cried Mrs. Lovell, eagerly.

"Wal," said Grimes, "I 've got a plan that I think 's goin' to work, if you 'll only fall in with it."

"A plan?" said Mrs. Lovell, eagerly; "O, what is it? But how really nice, and clever, and kind, and all that! But what is the plan, Mr. Grimes?"

"Wal," said Grimes, "I don't know exactly how it 'll strike you, and I 'm a little mite afraid that you may n't altogether like the looks of it."

"O, I 'm sure I 'll be perfectly charmed! I 'm sure *you* would n't think of any plan which would not be *perfectly* agreeable, Mr. Grimes."

"Wal, I hope you 'll like it," said Grimes, slowly and thoughtfully, "but I don't know about it just yet; you see the bother of it is, in the first place we 've got to divide ourselves."

"Divide ourselves?"

"Yes, that is to say, you 've got to separate yourself from your sister, and I don't know how you 'll like that."

"Separate? what, from Maudie?" exclaimed Mrs. Lovell; "what, leave Maudie?"

"O, she 'll be all right. There 's a friend of mine that 's goin' too, and he 'll put her through."

"Maudie! but I can't separate from Maudie," said Mrs. Lovell, sadly. "I really can't. Poor, dear Maudie! What would become of her if she went away by herself?"

"O, wal now," said Grimes, "there ain't the least mite of danger. My friend would die rather than have her run any risk. He 's a man of honor, an American, and a gentleman. He 's goin' off himself, and I spoke to him about this matter. It was the only thing I could think of. I 'd trust him as I would myself. Miss Heathcote could go with him, and I thought that I might take charge of you. We 've seemed to me to be the best way. But, if you feel anxious about Miss Heathcote, why I 'd agree to take charge of her, and you could go with my friend."

This last offer was an act of immense self-sacrifice on the part of Grimes, and it was made in a very doleful tone of voice.

"O, I don't know," said Mrs. Lovell, slowly, "that it is altogether necessary to do that; in fact, the trouble is about Maudie being separated from me. Could n't we manage in any way to go together, Mr. Grimes? It would be so very, very sad to be separated. Could n't that be avoided in any way, Mr. Grimes?"

And Mrs. Lovell turned to Grimes with an appealing look that was really most pathetic.

Grimes hesitated, and all his plan was once more revolved in his mind.

"No, 'm," said he at length, with much decision, — "no, 'm. I don't exactly see how I could manage to fix it that way."

Mrs. Lovell sighed.

"I 'm sure," said she, "I don't believe that poor Maudie would ever consent, but then she is sometimes very, very set, and I really don't know but that she might be brave enough. But how I could ever bear to have her leave me I really do not know."

"Wal," said Grimes, who felt it to be his duty to disarm her fears as far as possible and to soothe her natural anxiety, — "wal, after all, you know, it won't be for long. It 'll only be for a few days at the most. You 'll then be joined again and meet to part no more."

Mrs. Lovell shook her head sadly and solemnly.

"Wal, the fact of the matter is, 'm," said Grimes, "it can't be managed, as I can see; for, you see, it won't hold more 'n two."

"It?" repeated Mrs. Lovell. "What do you mean by it? Is it a carriage? Why, I 'm sure I can sit anywhere, so

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she is safe. Or is it a horse? Are we to go on horseback? And why can't we go together? I 'm sure I don't see why we can't go together, Mr. Grimes. Why, I 'd be willing to ride behind Maudie, or even to walk so long as I had her with me."

"Wal, 'm, the fact of the business is, it ain't a carriage, nor a horse, nor is it any kind of land conveyance, or water conveyance either. You see, our position is a little peculiar, and to escape from Paris requires very peculiar contrivances. Now, 'm, my plan had reference to a — a balloon."

At this Mrs. Lovell started and regarded Grimes in unspeakable amazement.

"A what!" she said; "a balloon?"

"Yes, 'm," said Grimes firmly, for he felt that the time had come to grapple with this subject, and that the question must be decided at once.

"A balloon?" repeated Mrs. Lovell. "You can't really mean what you say. A balloon? O Mr. Grimes! and I thought all the time that you were my friend."

"A balloon?" said Grimes, who felt wounded by this implied reproach. "A balloon? Why not? Why, 'm, a balloon is the safest and the easiest mode of travel that has ever been invented. I 'm aware," he continued with engaging candor, "that there does exist a kind of prejudice against balloons, but I assure you that it 's quite unfounded. You only get into your balloon, let the wind be fair, and the weather any ways moderate, and let a cool head have the navigation of her, and I 'll bet any money that you go by that balloon easier, pleasanter, quicker, safer, and altogether happier than by any mode of conveyance known to mortal man. Now, I *know* this to be the case as sure 's my name 's Grimes. Fact, 'm."

"A balloon!" exclaimed Mrs. Lovell, upon whom Grimes's remarks had made not the least impression, but who still clung to her prejudices against that mode of travel with unfaltering Grimes, you cannot possibly be in earnest. Why, it 's downright insanity. A balloon? Why, can you possibly suppose that I could have the rashness to venture into a balloon? Why, I 'm sure I 'd just as soon think of allowing myself to be fired from a cannon. And is that all that you can do for me? O dear! Then I 'm afraid that our case is indeed hopeless, and that nothing remains but to face the worst."

Mrs. Lovell spoke in a despairing tone which deeply affected her hearer. Grimes sat looking quite crushed, with an expression on his face which was made up of deep disappointment and equally deep remorse. But he struggled gallantly against both of these feelings, and at length found voice to speak.

"Wal, now, really, 'm, it strikes me that you 're puttin' it a little too strong altogether. When you speak of despair, and facin' the worst, you see there is a remedy. After all, balloonin' ain't so bad as despair. Lots of people are leavin' Paris all the time by this mode of conveyance. There ain't a single fault you can find with it, except that you can't guide them very straight. That might be an objection if you wanted to go to some place in particular. But you see you don't want that. You simply want to get out of Paris, no matter where you go. Now a balloon will do just exactly that for you. It 'll take you far enough away from here to put you out of reach of battle and murder and sudden death; and plague, pestilence, and famine; and sieges, blockades, and bombardments. Now, if a balloon 'll do just what you want to be done, and no more, I don't see why you should find fault with it because it don't do what you don't want it to do, and what it don't pretend to do."

To this Mrs. Lovell opposed the danger of such a mode of travel. Whereupon Grimes hastened to explain that there was no danger at all. Upon this a long conversation followed, in which Grimes endeavored to prove that a balloon was not only free

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ever, made but little impression upon Mrs. Lovell, who found herself quite unable to overcome her fears.

The end of it was that Grimes, as he rose to go, informed her that he would call again in two days, and exhorted her to think over his plan. If she could bring herself to accept it, he would be ready to leave at once; if not, then it would be necessary for her to remain in Paris during the siege.

And so he departed, leaving Mrs. Lovell in a state of mind bordering on despair.

XIX.

THREATS CUT SHORT.

THE desire which Mrs. Lovell had expressed for escape was certainly no weaker than it had been, nor had her sense of present danger in any way lessened. This sense of danger arose from various causes which must have fully revealed themselves. One class of dangers were those which were connected with the siege, involving plague, pestilence, famine, battle, murder, sudden death, explosions, bombardments, and red-hot shot, with other things of a similar character; all of which usually go to make up a first-class siege. The other class of dangers were those which arose from the vindictive menace of Du Potiron, and his possible powers for carrying his threats into execution. What these might be she could not exactly know, and these dangers, therefore, became all the more terrible from being mysterious; but among the most prominent of those evils which might be impending from this quarter, her fancy suggested arrests, imprisonment, separation from Maud, trial, condemnation, and, to crown all, the guillotine.

Such fancies as these, whatever might be their cause, were certainly not adapted to promote peace of mind or serenity of soul. Yet such was the structure of Mrs. Lovell's character, that she did not allow any unusual depression of spirit to appear. Her chief desire was that one of Mrs. Lovell's strongest characteristics was a most devoted and self-sacrificing affection for her younger sister. For this reason she had not told her anything about the particulars of Du Potiron's later visits, so that Maud was in complete ignorance of that person's plans and threats.

The next day came, and brought a new trouble to the afflicted lady. This new trouble came in the visible form of Madame Guimarin, who waited on Mrs. Lovell and requested a private interview. With some surprise Mrs. Lovell granted the request, and Madame Guimarin, prepared to make known the object of her call.

With many apologies and much circumlocution she mentioned the fact that she would be compelled to give up her house and seek a new home for herself. She assigned as the cause of this decision, first, the absence of lodgers; secondly, her own ill-health and nervousness; and, thirdly, a dismal apprehension which she had of some mysterious danger which was impending. On being questioned still more closely as to the nature of this danger, it came out that Du Potiron had been tampering with her, and had managed to work upon her fears to such an extent that her only idea now was of instant flight. She had no confidence in anything. Paris was without law, order, or anything else. The whole city might rise any day from its present deceitful quiet, and the whole population might prepare at a moment's warning to cut one another's throats. Madame Guimarin had gone through 1848, and the *coup d'état;* and the Red Spectre was to her a very real and a very terrific apparition indeed. The good lady also warned Mrs. Lovell to seek the protection of some friends if she had any, and not live in this way apart and by herself; for she had good reason to believe that Du Potiron was preparing some very unpleasant combination against her; and she had equally good reason to fear that Du

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carry it into execution.

All of this sank deep into Mrs. Lovell's soul and intensified her despondency. She now knew of nothing else that could be done except to seek once more the aid of Grimes. She could not remain in her present lodgings much longer. Madame Guimarin had named a week as the longest possible time that her exhausted nature could bear the terrible strain of her present position; and Mrs. Lovell saw that she would have to seek a new home somewhere within that time. Madame Guimarin mentioned one or two eligible places that were still accessible, but Mrs. Lovell concluded to wait and ask the advice of Grimes.

On the following day Grimes was to come again, and in her distress she looked forward to his appearance with an impatience that was quite unusual with her. At length a visitor was announced and she hurried to meet him.

To her intense annoyance she found the visitor to be, not Grimes, but the irrepressible Du Potiron. The annoyance which she felt was plainly visible in her face and manner as her eyes rested on him, and she did not make any effort whatever to conceal it. But Du Potiron took no notice of it whatever, and whether he saw it or not could not be detected from his manner. His manner, indeed, was in every respect the exact counterpart of what it had been on his former visit: that is to say, first, as she entered he advanced to meet her with outstretched hands, eager eye, and enthusiastic smile; then on reaching her he stopped, laid one hand impressively on his heart, and made a most elaborate bow.

"Madame," said he, "I again haf ze honneur of to presenter mes respects, and to lay mes compliments at your feets."

"Really, sir," said Mrs. Lovell, "I think I have a right to call this a most unwarrantable intrusion, after what has already passed between us. I thought,

"Mille pardons, madame," said Du Potiron, in a very obsequious tone. "I haf not ze presumption to hope zat I sall be more agreable to you zan before, an' I must explain zat I haf arrive zis time to see ze charmant Mo, to whom I wish you to be kind enough to convey ze assurance of my consideration distingué, and inform her zat I wait to see her."

"If you have come again to see Miss Heathcote," said Mrs. Lovell, "I can only say that it is quite useless, for she positively will not see you."

Du Potiron smiled, and waved his hand deprecatingly.

"Mais, madame, will you not haf consideration? Conceive what ees my chagrin. Moreovaire I haf rights, zey must not be despise and disregard."

"You have no rights whatever, sir, as I have already explained. What you base your very impertinent claim on is a letter which was never intended for you."

"Pardon, madame, it was addresse to me, in response to a letter sent by me to Mo. What more would you haf? Mo haf nevaire taken back her acceptance. Mo still claims me and holds me. She nevaire make any explanation of what you haf call ze meestake. So where was ze meestake?"

"You are mistaken. Miss Heathcote wrote you in Montreal, explaining it all; and it's very strange that you never got it."

Du Potiron at this shrugged his shoulders in incredulity.

"Très bien, madame," said he, dropping the tone of obsequious politeness which he had chosen to make use of thus far, and adopting one of insolent rudeness; "aha, you haf said sufficient, and now eet ees my turn. I haf sometin' to say to you. Listen. I say I *sall* see Mo and you *must* send for her."

"That is absurd," said Mrs. Lovell, quietly.

"Absurd! très bien! You sall see, madame. I haf sometin for you zat

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hat been. I haf come zis day as a friend for ze last time; and if you are unraisonable, I sall come again with means zat sall make you surrendre."

"I have already mentioned," said Mrs. Lovell, with unalterable coolness, "the fact that I neither believe in your power to injure me, nor fear it."

"You do not? Aha! très bien! then you sall see it. Aha, yes, you sall see it. You sall be brought before ze sovereign peuple. You sall be arrest. You sall be prisoner. You sall be punish."

"Who is to do all this, pray?"

"Who — moi — I — myself; in ze name of l'humanité."

"That is quite absurd," said Mrs. Lovell. "I live quietly here; I never harmed the sovereign people, and they don't even know of my existence. So how they can arrest me, and punish me for doing nothing, is a statement which I confess I am quite unable to make out."

"You not comprehend?" said Du Potiron. "Aha — très bien, zen I sall make zat you sall comprehend ze realité. Look at me," he continued, slapping his chest vigorously and elevating his eyebrows, "do you see me? Who am I? Moi! I am a power. I haf command, influence, autorité. The tyrant ees overtrown," — and he made a flourish with his right hand, — "ze peuple haf triumph!" — a flourish with both hands, — "they rise!" — a stamp of his foot, — "I rise!" — violent slapping of the chest, "I haf command!" — another violent slapping, — "I am obey!" — a dark frown and both hands clutching each other convulsively, — "I harangue ze peuple!" — another flourish with the right, — "I indicate zeir enemies!" — a flourish with the left, — "I anform zem of ze spies, ze myriad spies zat fill Paris!" — hoarse intonations with clasped hands, — "ze spies zat Bismarck employ to effecter ze destruction of la France!" — eyes rolled up and hands crossed over breast, — "zat is pathie." — two or three steps backward, — "and save it from ze insidious spy!" — a groan. "Trés bien," — a smack of the lips, accompanied with a wild glare at Mrs. Lovell and followed by the stamp of both feet, — "and now do you comprehend? Hah?" — a wild gesture with clenched fists, — "do you comprehend ze danjaire zat impends? Hah?" — another fist flung out, — "who is ze next spy to denounce? Hah?" — a step forward with both fists flung forth, — "who is ze spy secret and mystérieuse zat conceal herself here in zis rue, in zis house? Hah?" — A gasp. — "Eef I denounce you, how sall you save yourself? Hah?" — Another gasp. — "Eef I denounce you as a spy, what sall you become in deux or tree day? Hah?" — A yell of maniacal derision, accompanied by snorts, stampings of both feet, and clappings of his hands. — "And zis is what you sall haf! I sall show no mercy!" — A gasp. — "I sall be inexorable!" — A howl. — "You sall be prisoner!" — slappings of the breast, gorilla fashion, — "and Mo — Mo le charmante — le tendre — Mo!" Here his eyes were raised in ecstasy to the ceiling, and the sentence died away in an inarticulate murmur.

So Du Potiron raved to this extent and still further. He had full swing. He let himself loose. He got the one idea in his head, and let his fancy play freely round it. He was excited as a Frenchman only can be, and acted as an excited Frenchman only can.

As for Mrs. Lovell she had never been called on before to behold an excited Frenchman, and the sight of Du Potiron naturally created some surprise. She was not what is called a brave woman, nor did she ever dream of laying any claim to such a character; but on the present occasion she did not show the slightest fear. It may have been because in the appearance of Du Potiron there was less of the terrible than there was of that other quality which lies closely associated with it, — the grotesque, — bear-

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ridiculous bears to the sublime. Mrs. Lovell might therefore have been amused at the pranks which Du Potiron was thus playing before high heaven, had there not been various serious thoughts in her mind which checked all tendencies to mirthfulness.

Mrs. Lovell therefore stood looking at Du Potiron, neither smiling with mirth nor trembling with terror, but regarding him with cold curiosity and mild wonder. She appeared perfectly cool and self-possessed; and it seemed as though the spectacle of this coolness only served to increase the excitement of the visitor. In this position then these two were, Mrs. Lovell cool, calm, collected; Du Potiron lashing himself into greater fury, gesticulating, howling, menacing, taunting, interrogating, denouncing, advancing, retreating, shaking his fists, and going through all those performances which have already been so minutely reported. Now at this very moment and in the very crisis of this scene another person quietly made his appearance, entering the room behind Du Potiron, in such a way that he was not seen by that excitable and too impetuous person. The new-comer was the visitor whom Mrs. Lovell had been expecting impatiently for two long days, for whose appearance she had looked so eagerly, and who, had he tried, could not possibly have chosen a better period for acting the *deus ex machina*, and thus winning the everlasting gratitude of Mrs. Lovell, than this very moment which chance had thus opened to him.

The new-comer was Mr. Grimes.

At the sight of him Mrs. Lovell's heart gave a wild bound, and she felt as if she could have flung herself at his feet in joy and gratitude. Du Potiron's back was turned toward him, so that he did not see Grimes, nor did he see the change in Mrs. Lovell's face; for just at that moment he had thrown his eyes, his fists, and his soul toward the ceiling, and was in the midst of an eloquent invocation of the goddess of After which he once more resumed his strain of menace.

Grimes stood and looked around with an air of surprise; he returned Mrs. Lovell's glance with a benevolent smile that would have done honor to that lady's guardian angel, and then stood listening. He did not see Du Potiron's face and so did not know at first who this eccentric being might be, but finally, after a few moments' listening, he grasped the situation, and made up his mind as to his own course. Du Potiron was just showing Mrs. Lovell how inevitable her doom was, and how dark it would be, when at that moment Grimes walked toward him and laid a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"Yes," said he, somewhat dryly, "all that 's very well; but, my friend, you 've got me to reckon with, and it strikes me that you 've left that fact out of the account."

At this Du Potiron started as if he had been shot, and whirling round found himself face to face with Grimes.

For reasons that have already been explained, it is sufficiently evident that the man who now confronted Du Potiron was one of the very last whom he would have wished to see, and he stood staring at the new-comer in dumb bewilderment.

As for Grimes, he too was utterly amazed at seeing Du Potiron, but not at all disconcerted. After the first surprise his glance of astonished recognition was succeeded by an expression of grim satisfaction, of a nature that was not by any means calculated to reassure Du Potiron.

"So it's you, is it?" said Grimes, slowly and with a sardonic smile. "I don't think we 've had the pleasure of meetin' with one another since we parted in Montreal. I 've got somethin' to say to you, and if you 'll be kind enough to step this way, I 'll take it as a favor. Allow me."

And with these words Grimes grasped Du Potiron by the collar, inserting his hand in no gentle manner down his neck, and forcing Du Potiron's

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way.

"I won't detain you long," said Grimes; "and this lady will excuse us for a moment."

Du Potiron struggled and gasped, but to no purpose. Grimes walked solemnly to the door with a slow, steady step, like Fate dragging his helpless prey after him. Arriving outside, he dragged him along the hall till he reached the top of the stairway. Then he stopped; and, still holding him by the collar, he stood in front of him and glared upon him like some avenging power.

"So, this is the way you pass your time, is it?" he cried, shaking Du Potiron with one hand till he trembled all over, and holding his clenched fist close to his face. "So, you can't find any better employment for your time, can't you, than to come here and bully an unprotected female. You miserably, skinny, lean, lantern-jawed, frog-eatin' Frenchman you! What do you think of yourself now? Hey? You did n't reckon on my bein' round, did you? Rather think not. Don't you feel that you 're a poor, lost, guilty sinner by nature and by practice? Look me in the face, you miserable Parley Voo, and tell me what you mean by this."

All this time Du Potiron had been kicking, struggling, and cursing; but kicks, struggles, and sibilant French curses, with the accompaniment of rolling guttural *r*'s, availed nothing to save him from the grasp of Grimes. At this last appeal he gasped forth something about "Vengeance — you sall soffaire — République — citizens of Paris," and other incoherences.

"So that 's all you 've got to say, is it? Well now, listen to me," said Grimes, fiercely. "If you ever dare to show so much as the tip of your infernal nose in this place again, I 'll kill you! Do you hear that? I 'll kill you! And now go."

Saying this, Grimes pushed Du Potiron forward toward the stairs and gave him a kick. Du Potiron went confused heap at the bottom.

Grimes then turned back and walked toward Mrs. Lovell's apartments.

XX.

DRIVEN TO EXTREMITIES.

When Grimes came back, he found Mrs. Lovell still there. She was very much excited and began to pour forth a torrent of grateful words. She told him how much she had suffered from the impertinent intrusions of Du Potiron, and how he had threatened her. In her explanation she did not allude to Maud, nor make any reference to Du Potiron's claim on her, for she thought it unnecessary. Grimes, however, had heard Carrol's story, and knew that Du Potiron claimed to be her accepted lover. The presence of the Frenchman in Paris was rather a puzzle to him at first; but as he now recalled the fright of Carrôl on board the steamer, he perceived that his own surmises at that time were correct, and that Du Potiron had actually crossed the ocean with them; though how he had managed to conceal himself was a mystery. To Grimes it now seemed as if Mrs. Lovell was fighting off the Frenchman from Maud; for of Maud's own state of mind about the matter he, of course, knew nothing.

Mrs. Lovell all the while evinced much agitation, and this grew stronger and stronger as she went on. It was the result of her intense excitement. After all, that interview with Du Potiron had been a sore trial, and the very calmness which she had maintained cost her no small struggle. Now that it was over, a reaction took place, and her nervous excitement grew worse and worse, until at length, in spite of her efforts, she burst into tears.

At this Grimes was overwhelmed. The sight of Du Potiron had created an excitement in his soul, but the sensation was of an entirely pleasing description. This spectacle of Mrs. Lovell in distress, shedding tears before him, —

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citement, but of a kind that was altogether painful. He looked at her for a few moments in dumb despair, and a flush passed over his face. Then he started up from the chair on which he had been sitting and wandered in an aimless way about the room. Then he came back to her and implored her not to cry. Then he resumed his wandering career. At length, in the darkest hour of his despair, a bright thought came to him, illuminating all his soul. He at once acted upon it. The thought was in the highest degree natural. The thought had reference to that panacea for all woes which he himself always carried about his person; that generous spirit which he kept imprisoned in his flask, and which was even now in his pocket all ready to exert its benign influence over any sorrowing soul that might stand in need of it; in short, whiskey: so Grimes tore his whiskey-flask from his pocket and unscrewed the stopper, and took the cup from the bottom of the flask and poured out the whiskey till that cup was full and running over. The fumes of the strong liquid arose and filled the room and penetrated to the very soul of Mrs. Lovell, as it wandered far away in the regions of sorrow and tears. It startled her. She opened her eyes amid her tears and stared at Grimes.

He was before her on one knee, with his eyes fixed compassionately upon her, a flask in one hand, a cup full of whiskey in the other. This he was offering her with a mixture of helplessness and anxiety that was most affecting. Now Mrs. Lovell was deeply agitated, painfully so in fact, nerves upset, and all that sort of thing, as was natural, being a lady of delicate frame and slender build; Mrs. Lovell, I repeat, was excessively agitated, and no end of direful forebodings at that time filled her heart, increasing that agitation; but at the same time the spectacle which Grimes thus presented as he held forth the proffered whiskey, together with the fact itself of whiskey of all liquors being offered to her, was so complete *bouleversement* of feeling. Terror vanished. Panic fled. Fear was forgotten. A long peal of merry laughter, on the healthy side of the hysterical, burst from her, and the refreshing effect of that laughter was such that it restored her to herself.

She declined the whiskey, and declared herself quite well again. It was the excitement, she said, of the late scene with that insane Frenchman, coming as it did upon other exciting scenes.

"And O," she went on, "this awful, awful place! I showed no fear, Mr. Grimes, no, not the slightest; but now, when I think of those dreadful Reds, and this man with his threats, I declare I dare not stay in Paris a moment longer. But how can I escape? O, what a fearful position! In prison here and exposed to danger. What can I do? He may have influence, as he says. Paris is always moved by the basest of the population. Robespierre was a miserable charlatan, yet he ruled Paris, and France too. People that in other places would only be despised become great men in this miserable city. Charlatans and knaves do what they please here. And how do I know but that by to-morrow Du Potiron himself may be governor of Paris?"

"That 's very true," said Grimes, as he solemnly returned his whiskey-flask to his pocket. "It 's gospel truth, every word of it. The monkey and the tiger go together to make up the Parisian. I am Du Potiron's master today, but he may be mine to-morrow. There 's no safety, as you say, ma'am, in this here infernal hole; and what you 've got to do is this, you 've got to fly."

"To fly? O, how glad I would be if I only could!" said Mrs. Lovell, in despairing tones.

"Wal, 'm," said Grimes, "that is the very thing I came to see you about today. I want to persuade you to fly, — to fly really, and literally, — to fly in the air, in a balloon. 'Fly with me,'

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some song or other, but I now say it to you in sober prose."

"But O, Mr. Grimes, the frightful danger!"

"Danger? why there ain't any danger at all. The balloon affords the easiest mode of travel known to man."

"Easy!"

"Yes, easy. Why, only think, you step into your car. The balloon rises, you don't feel any motion at all. The earth seems to sink away from beneath. Then it glides past you. You seem to be perfectly still. If you look down, you see the country sliding away, while you are motionless. If you are afraid to look down, you simply shut your eyes, and may imagine yourself to be in your easy-chair. You feel no motion, you don't even feel any wind. In this easy and agreeable manner you are carried away from this miserable place; and when you have gone far enough, you descend as gently as a flake of snow, and find yourself in Bordeaux, or Havre, or perhaps London. Easy? Why, it's luxurious. There ain't any such travellin' as this in all the world. Why, you'd never dream of objectin', if you knew all about it as I do."

"But what makes people so afraid about balloons if they're so easy?" asked Mrs. Lovell.

"Ignorance, ma'am," replied Grimes coolly, "mere ignorance. You see, the balloon can't be utilized for ordinary purposes of travel, because it's generally at the mercy of the wind. But for purposes of escape it's invaluable. You get into your balloon on a calm day, and sit quiet, and in the course of a few hours you find yourself far away from all danger, safe and sound, free as a bird possessed of all the inalienable rights of man, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Mrs. Lovell listened eagerly to this, and in spite of herself was favorably affected by the confident tone of Grimes, and the pleasing picture which he drew of balloon travelling.

separated from her?"

"Why, ma'am, I assure you she'll be as safe as you. My friend that I told you of'll take care of her; and I assure you he'll answer with his life for her safety, just as I will for yours."

"But who is he?" said Mrs. Lovell. "I cannot bear to separate from Maud; but to hand her over to the care of a stranger is really too dreadful."

"Wal, as to that, my friend ain't exactly a stranger —"

"Is n't he? Well, that is more encouraging. Who is he? Do we know him? Does Maudie know him? Is he a friend of yours? Who can he be? It can't be Mr. Carrol."

Mrs. Lovell made this suggestion in the most natural way in the world, for the simple reason that Carrol was the only one that she could think of who was at once an acquaintance of herself and of Grimes. She knew also that Carrol had crossed the ocean and supposed that he might have accompanied Grimes ever since.

As for Grimes, he had not intended to mention Carrol for reasons already stated; but since Mrs. Lovell had asked him directly, he saw no particular reason for concealment, and so he at once informed her that Carrol was the man.

This information excited in Mrs. Lovell's mind thoughts of an important character. The fact that Carrol was here ready to take charge of Maud was in a certain sense very reassuring. If she could bring herself to attempt such a flight, she certainly could not hope to find a better companion for Maud than he would be. She understood the difficulty that had arisen perfectly; and though she had not heard of their recent meeting, she felt sure that the difficulty was a trifling one which could easily be explained. She sympathized deeply with Maud in the sorrow that she had suffered on account of the misunderstanding with Carrol, and longed to have it all cleared up. This seemed to her to be a way

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then Maud might have a chance to explain or to come to an explanation, and the result could not be other than satisfactory to all concerned. One objection still remained, and that was that it was by no means in accordance with *les convenances* of society for a young girl like Maud to be committed to the care of a young man, but the natural answer to this was that in desperate emergencies *les convenances* must give way; and if one is flying for one's life from pressing danger, one must not be too particular about the road.

The result was that Mrs. Lovell began to look more favorably upon the plan of Grimes.

"I do assure you, ma'am," said Grimes with unchanged solemnity, — "I do assure you, and declare to you, that you are not safe here. A balloon? why, you 'd be safer almost in a sky-rocket than you are here. Paris is more like a lunatic asylum than anything else that I know of. Everybody is ravin' mad, and you never can tell on one day what they 're goin' to do on the next. Paris altogether beats me, and the more I see of the place and the people the more I feel dumbfounded. Now, if I 'd only myself to consider, I 'd hang on here, and see them put this siege through, for I 've never been at a siege before; but as it is, I give up this fancy as an idle piece of curiosity, and I feel that the highest and proudest dooty of my life is to devote myself to the rescue of you ladies; which same, I 'm free to say, my friend Carrol feels similar to me, and is likewise ready to be up and doin'. All that I want is your frank and cordial consent. I don't want you to be timid about it; I want you to feel that the thing is safe and easy."

To this Mrs. Lovell had many things to say, all of which tended toward assuring herself further as to the safety of balloon travelling. Here Grimes came out strong. He explained the whole principle of the balloon. He described most minutely the improvements that had been made with the rationale of each. He gave much information about the past history of balloon voyages, and indulged in some speculations as to the future prospects of aerostation. To all of which Mrs. Lovell listened patiently and attentively, willing to believe the best, and to be convinced.

"Your decision," concluded Grimes, "must be made at once. The danger is pressin' and the balloons are ready. A favorable spell of weather has arrived. Now is the accepted time. We can start off at once, and remember that in a brief period of time you will soar aloft beyond these transitory troubles, and find yourself in the midst of a celestial calm. No matter where the wind may blow us, there we may go, and we will find safety and peace. But to do this we must leave at once. In fact, I may as well say that I 've actually engaged the balloons. They 're mine. We 've got to go, and that 's the long and the short of it. They 're fine machines, not too large. Comfortable even to luxury, and fitted in every way to carry Grimes and his fortunes."

Some further conversation followed; but the end of it was, that Mrs. Lovell found her last objection answered and her last scruple removed by the eloquent, the cogent, and the resistless pleadings of Grimes; and, with this understanding, he took his departure.

Hitherto Mrs. Lovell had kept all her troubles and her plans a profound secret from Maud; but now, of course, it was necessary to make her acquainted with her latest decision. The best way to act seemed to her to give a full, complete, and candid narrative of all the events of the past few weeks, so that Maud might understand the state of affairs, and comprehend in the fullest manner the position in which they were. After all, it was Maud who was chiefly concerned; it was for her that Mrs. Lovell incurred the danger that

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her by a simple representation of the facts of the case.

She therefore told Maud about the various visits of Du Potiron, his impertinent assertions of a right to call on her, his insolent demands, and his violent threats. She informed her of her own encounter with Grimes on the Champs Elysées, and her appeal to him for help. She enlarged upon her own anxieties and terrors, and explained why she had not mentioned this before. She told her of Madame Guimarin's decision, and portrayed in glowing colors the utter misery and hopelessness of their situation. She then related the scene that had just occurred, where the violence of Du Potiron had been arrested by the appearance of Grimes. After these preliminaries she described the full danger of their life in Paris as it was now revealed to her own mind, and the possible fulfilment of the threats of Du Potiron. All these things served as an excellent introduction to the plan of Grimes, and the novel way of escape which he had proposed; when she reached this subject she endeavored to disarm the possible prejudices of Maud by resorting to the rose-colored descriptions which Grimes had given of aerial navigation. Plagiarizing from him, and quoting him, she presented the subject of balloon travelling in the most attractive manner possible, and thus by easy gradation she reached the particular part of her subject about which she felt the most anxiety. This was their separation, and the association of Carrol with Maud.

Mrs. Lovell did not feel sure how Maud would take this, for she did not know exactly the present state of her mind with regard to Carrol. She at first alluded to him in general terms, and at length ventured to mention his name. Having done so, she quoted Grimes as to Carrol's eagerness to assist, and readiness to answer for her safety with his life; and concluded with an earnest admonition to Maud this opportunity of escape from danger.

To all this Maud listened without one single word. The whole thing came to her like a thunder-clap, but she was in such a depressed state of mind that her dull feelings were not much aroused. She was, in fact, in a mood to acquiesce with perfect indifference in any proposal which might be made, and consequently listened without emotion. But at length, when Carrol's name was mentioned, she experienced an instantaneous change. At once all her indifference vanished. A flush passed over her pale face, her dull eyes brightened, she listened with intense absorption to everything that Mrs. Lovell had to say, and the eagerness which she evinced showed that she was not at all inclined to offer any objections.

In fact, to all those things which had terrified Mrs. Lovell, Maud was utterly indifferent. The threats of Du Potiron, the dangers of Paris life, the perils of balloon voyaging, all these were things of small moment to her. But the mention of Carrol was another matter. The fact that he had shown an interest in her, that he was capable of something like devotion to her, that he had volunteered an act of devotion, — all these things roused her. She did not stop to try to reconcile this professed devotion with the apparent indifference which he had manifested in their last interview; she was not sufficiently exigeant to raise objections on the ground of his not calling; the fact of his offer was enough; and the idea of his association with her in an attempt to rescue her, made even a balloon seem attractive. To be taken by Carrol on that adventurous flight seemed to her the most sweet and blessed of conceivable things; and while Mrs. Lovell was wondering how Maud would receive such a startling proposal, that proposal was already accepted in the mind of Maud, and regarded with joy, as something which might alleviate her sorrows,

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cation with Carrol.

And so it was that Maud's answer came clear and unmistakable and most satisfactory.

"O Georgie, what an awful time you must have had! I had no idea of it at all. What made you so close? Of course I'll do anything that you want me to; and as to balloons, do you know I think it would be rather nice? I do, really."

XXI.

LAYING THE GHOST.

CARROL'S knowledge of Maud's address constituted a new temptation, which it was hard to resist. It was very difficult for him to keep away, when he knew that she was so near. In his resistance to the attraction which she exerted over him, he had nothing to strengthen him but his consideration for her, and his conviction that it would be better for her not to see him again. But this very consideration for her arose out of his love for her, which at the same time drew him to her.

For a day or two he succeeded in restraining himself, but at length his desire to see Maud grew uncontrollable, and, after feeble efforts to overcome it, he allowed himself to drift nearer and nearer to the place of which Grimes had told him, until at length he came within sight of the house. It was the day on which Grimes had made his visit; and had he arrived a few moments earlier, he would have seen the manly form of his friend disappearing inside the doorway.

As he came within sight of the house his heart beat fast with feverish excitement, and an intense longing seized him to go in. He hesitated, and a struggle began in his soul, wherein desire on the one hand wrestled with conscientious scruples on the other. Already his scruples were beginning to give way, and his desire was gaining the mastery, when his eyes, which all the time had been fixed upon the door, ing from it.

It was a man of medium size, thin, dressed in a soldier's uniform; but the dress did not excite any attention on the part of Carrol, whose whole gaze was fixed upon the face. The face was deathly pale; the man held a handkerchief to his forehead, which was stained with his blood, and a stream of blood also trickled down his face. He walked slowly and painfully, and going along the sidewalk he turned around the first corner and disappeared from view.

Carrol had been on the opposite side of the street, but the figure had not turned its eyes toward him at all. It had simply come forth from that door, walked along the opposite sidewalk, and disappeared.

As Carrol looked he felt petrified with utter horror. That face belonged to one and to one alone. It was the face that had never ceased to haunt him ever since that fearful night. Even so had that face appeared to his fancy over and over again as he brought before his mind the events of that night; and even so had the face appeared night after night in abhorrent dreams, ghastly, death-struck, with a blood-stream slowly trickling down from a mortal wound. There was only one thought in Carrol's mind, — his victim! Du Potiron! once more appearing! the dead once more revealed to the living!

For a few moments Carrol stood thus petrified in utter horror, and then in a wild frenzy he hurried away, flying he knew not where, all his brain on fire with the thoughts that came thronging over his mind. All the anguish of that night at Montreal was renewed; and his panic flight was repeated, with all its dread accompaniments. But this time the daylight favored him, and the tumult and roar of the crowded streets assisted him to regain something of his natural composure. But as the immediate terror died out, there remained behind a deep perplexity, a dark misgiving as to the nature and the meaning of this second

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really appear to the living; and here was a proof that the murderer must be haunted by his victim. This opened before him a new horror in life. For if he should be doomed through the remainder of his days to be thus haunted, what was the use of life to him? This time the apparition had come, not in darkness and at midnight, but in the full glare of day and in the midst of a crowded city, walking under the daylight along the paved sidewalk. Where would the next revelation take place? No doubt that warning would be repeated, if he should dare ever again to visit Maud, or to speak to her. Between him and her there now stood this grisly phantom to keep them forever asunder. How could he now hope to assist Maud to escape, or how could he ever venture even to speak to her again?

Starting forth thus from a full belief in the supernatural character of the figure of Du Potiron, and allowing a vivid fancy to play around it in this mad fashion, Carrol soon worked himself into a state of mind that was half despair and half frenzy. The future now afforded no hope whatever. It seemed useless for him to struggle any longer against such a fate as his; and he began to feel that the very best thing for him to do would be to avail himself of the earliest opportunity that offered to escape from Paris, return home, and surrender himself to the authorities. A prolonged consideration of this course of action resulted in a fixed decision in favor of it; and this decision had the effect of restoring to his mind its calmness. That calmness was deep depression and dull despair, but it seemed more tolerable than the madness to which he had just been subject. It was in this frame of mind that he returned to his lodgings. It was now late. Grimes was there, and by his face showed that he had something of importance to communicate.

"Hallo," cried he, "you 're back at last. Three cheers! I 've arranged morrow; and what do you think of that, for instance?"

Grimes paused and looked triumphantly at Carrol, expecting some reply commensurate with the grandeur of the news. But Carrol made no reply; and Grimes, looking at him more closely, saw in his face such pain and distress, that his own feelings underwent an instantaneous change.

"Has anything happened?" he asked hurriedly. "What 's the matter? You look more like death than life."

"I 've been near death to-day," said Carrol in a low voice. "I 've seen It."

"Seen it? Seen what? Death?"

"*Him*, you know — the man that — that — you know. Du Potiron."

Grimes gave a long whistle.

"The dead arise!" moaned Carrol, "and they come to haunt the guilty!"

"Haunt your grandmother," cried Grimes. "What do you mean?"

Upon this Carrol told his terrible tale, enlarging particularly upon the fearful aspect of the spectre. Grimes listened patiently, and at its close he struck his fist heavily on the table.

"See here," said he, "I can't stand this any longer. I begin to think I 've been doin' wrong all along, but I swear I did it for the best. Look here, now. It 's all infernal humbug."

"What do you mean?" asked Carrol, startled by the tone of his friend.

"Why, Du Potiron ain't dead at all. You did n't kill him. He 's alive. You saw the man himself."

Carrol shook his head despondently. "I heard him fall —"

"You heard some rubbish fall, I dare say. You were scared, and a lot of old plaster tumbled down. It was n't Du Potiron, and you never shot that man; that 's so, as sure as you 're born. You only heard plaster and rats."

"You can never make me believe —" began Carrol, solemnly.

"Pooh, nonsense. Look here, now, I tell you that dool was all a sham."

"A sham?"

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myself. You know that."

"A sham? a sham? no bullets?" stammered Carrol, utterly bewildered.

"I tell you it was all a sham. Du Potiron was aboard the steamer with us; and he 's now in Paris; and you saw him to-day."

Carrol sat for a time quite bewildered. There was an immense reaction going on in his mind. He could not help believing Grimes; and yet he had so long dwelt upon his own fancy, that it was difficult to give up his belief. In the midst of these thoughts, however, there began to arise in his mind the idea that he had been tricked and duped, and that Grimes had been amusing himself with his sufferings. A dark resentment arose within him at such treatment, and rising from his seat he looked at Grimes with a gloomy frown.

"If you really mean what you say, and if you 've been playing on me a joke like this —" he said, bitterly.

"Stop," said Grimes, rising, and facing him. "Not a word more. Don't say it, or you and I 'll quarrel. Wait till you hear what I 've got to say about it. Sit down and hear me."

Carrol resumed his seat and waited in stern silence, while Grimes went on with his explanation.

"Now see here," said Grimes. "You remember askin' me to be your second. I saw that you could n't fire, and that you 'd only get hit; so I arranged that plan of a duel in the dark. Very well. Now do you suppose I was goin' to have your blood or that other fellow's on my conscience? No. I loaded the pistols, but did n't put any bullets in. I thought you 'd both fire, and then you 'd think of course that both shots had missed; and so it would all turn out right, and no harm done. Was there any practical joke in that? So you see Du Potiron could n't have fallen at your shot; and, in fact, my idea is that he jumped out of the back window while we were fastening the door; for I thought I heard footsteps it. Now, I don't see anythin' in that to apologize for; and I did n't do anythin' that I would n't do again. I thought you 'd have your shots, and that you 'd get over your love-affair in time, and that all would turn out right in the end. So I cleared out and did n't think any more about it till you and I met on board the steamer.

"Wal, I confess I was a good deal troubled when I saw how you took things, and was goin' to tell you the whole truth, especially after you saw Du Potiron, but was prevented by one thing."

"What was that?" asked Carrol. "What possible thing could have made you keep up the miserable delusion, and allow me to suffer such horrors? I swear to you no real murderer could have suffered worse than I did."

"Wal," said Grimes, "the whole trouble arose from the fact that the ladies were on board of the steamer. Now I saw that the sight of Miss Heathcote made you raving mad. You did n't hate her, you know; you were madly in love with her; and her bein' on board prevented your gettin' over your feelin's. She had jilted you, and there she was on board the same boat, and you were goin' crazy about her. Now it struck me that the only thing for a jilted lover like you was to have some other thing to take up his thoughts. You had that in your fancy about Du Potiron, and so I thought I 'd let it slide. I did n't dream of anything so childish as a practical joke, but simply acted out of a fatherly consideration for your good. My motive was good, whatever my policy may have been. It was to give you a counter-irritation."

"I think you might at least have told me after we arrived in Paris," said Carrol, in a tone which was now quite free from resentment.

"Wal," said Grimes, "my reason was just the same. The ladies were here, and there you were with your abuse of Miss Heathcote, so that if you

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changed your tone a little lately, and I 'd made up my mind to tell you the fust chance."

"What was he doing there?" asked Carrol, "at her house. So if it is really Du Potiron, it seems that, while I have been suffering, she has been enjoying his society, travelling across the ocean with him, receiving his visits here, while I — "

"Come now," roared Grimes, "no more of that infernal jealous nonsense. Here you go again, full tilt, pitchin' into Miss Heathcote in the old style. I don't know anythin' about her real feelin's for the Frenchman, but I don't think they 're over tender; for what I saw of him to-day did n't lead me to suppose that he was on very agreeable terms in that house."

"*You* saw him there? *You* did?" cried Carrol eagerly; "was he — was he visiting them? Did she — did she — seem glad? But how did his head get cut — ?"

"Wal, I believe I had some share in that catastrophe," said Grimes. "I 'll tell you all about it."

Carrol heard the whole story, and now learned for the first time the danger that the ladies were in, and the true position of Du Potiron with reference to them. Grimes informed him about Mrs. Lovell's appeal to him for help, his proposal about balloons, and the circumstances which had led to the acquiescence of the ladies in such a dangerous mode of flight. He also gave a very vivid account of Du Potiron's treatment of Mrs. Lovell, and the immediate result of it to Du Potiron himself.

Grimes informed him also of the measures which he had been taking that day to hasten their flight. He had been to M. Nadar and had engaged two balloons. He himself with Mrs. Lovell would embark in one, while Carrol and Miss Heathcote should take the other with an aeronaut to sail the craft. Very many little details had to be arranged, but everything was to be in readiness during the day balloons were too much exposed to the bullets of the Prussians. The weather was sufficiently favorable for a start, and if it only continued so nothing would prevent their departure. The ladies were to be ready by the following evening, and Grimes and Carrol were to go to the house for them. They were perfectly willing to go, for they found the terrors of Paris greater than those of the untried voyage in the air; and the confident assurances of Grimes had produced a great effect upon the trustful nature of Mrs. Lovell.

And now the clouds that had for so long a time hung over the soul of Carrol slowly rolled away, and the revelation of Maud's truth, together with that of his own innocence, combined to fill him with the most exultant hope. The little difference that still remained between him and Maud could be terminated by one word. Her resentment could not be maintained, for she had consented to go with him in his care. To the perils of balloon-voyaging he never gave a single thought, his mind being only taken up with the idea of himself seated once more by the side of Maud, with not a cloud to mar their perfect mutual understanding.

But in the midst of his new-found joy there arose within him an intense longing to see Maud, from whom he was no longer repelled either by conscientious scruples or by grisly phantoms. He now remembered his terrors with indifference, and in his delight at the truth he had no resentment whatever against Grimes or anybody else for that matter. Once more he and Grimes resumed the old unclouded air of free and familiar intercourse, and talked over the coming events. Carrol, however, could not help feeling impatient at the time that yet separated him from Maud, and hinted in a vague way at some effort which he might make to call on the ladies earlier in the day.

"Now don't, my good fellow," said

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flight. You see it's such uncommon short notice. Waitin' two or three hours longer won't hurt you, and will be a good deal more convenient for them than if you were to go botherin' around them all the day."

"But don't you think they may be in some danger from Du Potiron? I should think it would be better for one of us to be there."

"O, I don't know! I don't seem to think that one day 'll make any great difference."

"But if the fellow can do anything, he 'll do it at once. He must have been venomous enough before; but now, after your treatment of him, he 'll move heaven and earth to get them into trouble; and, what 's more, he 'll do it as quick as he can. It seems to me that if there is any danger at all, there 'll be as much danger to-morrow as there would be a week from this."

"Wal, I don't know, now that you speak of it, but what there may be a good deal in what you say; still I don't see what can be done. People have got to run some risk, and to-morrow is the risk that the ladies have got to run. They can't be actually safe till they get outside of Paris, or above it, which is all the same."

"On the whole," said Carrol, "I think I 'd better keep a lookout in that direction."

"What for?"

"O, to satisfy my own mind!"

"There won't be much satisfaction in looking; and if anythin' was to happen, you would n't be able to do anythin'. On the whole, I should n't wonder but that you 'd be doin' better by makin' yourself scarce till the appointed hour."

"Well, I 'll see," said Carrol, who, at the same time, was profoundly convinced that he would spend the whole of the next day in the vicinity of Maud's house, and burst in upon her presence long before what Grimes called the appointed time.

THE following day dawned bright and pleasant. The sky was perfectly cloudless, and the clear atmosphere gave promise of a favorable night.

Grimes had arranged everything on the previous day, and M. Nadar had solemnly engaged to be at the Place St. Pierre with two balloons and an aeronaut. There was therefore nothing in reality for him to do; but Grimes was a man who never felt inclined to trust his business to others, and could not feel satisfied unless he himself were present. It was this feeling rather than any actual necessity that led him forth to pass the time with M. Nadar, so that he might see with his own eyes that everything was preparing. He was also actuated by a very natural desire to learn something more, if anything more could be learned, of the aeronautic art. Before starting he informed Carrol that he would call for the ladies at about dusk; but that if the ladies were frightened about anything and wished to leave before then, they might go to the Place St. Pierre.

Grimes then set out on his way to visit M. Nadar. He strolled along in a leisurely manner, meditating on the prospect before him, and quite oblivious to the scene around him. He traversed street after street, and soon left the busier parts of the city behind him, and still went on, feeding his active fancy with very many pleasing scenes, and images and events, all of which were of a highly cheerful and pleasant character. Had he not been so very much taken up with these pleasing fancies, he would not have failed to notice the fact that he was followed by several men dressed as National Guards, but whose evil faces made them seem like *mouchards* of the fallen Empire, who, finding their occupation gone, had transformed themselves into the defenders of the Republic with no very striking success. These men followed him, at first cautiously, but at length, perceiving that he did not take the

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and occasionally addressing remarks to one another. At length two of them walked ahead of the others, towards Grimes. He, on his part, was quite unconscious of this new movement, and stalked on before, losing himself in the pleasing fancies with which his mind was filled. The two men hurried on till they caught up to him, when they divided, one going on each side, and at a signal each placed a hand on Grimes's shoulder.

In a moment Grimes was brought back to real life. He stopped and confronted the men. The others meanwhile walked up and surrounded him. There were over a dozen of them, and all were armed.

"What do you want?" asked Grimes in his usual Yankee French.

"Who are you?" asked one of the men, who had first seized him.

"An American citizen," said Grimes.

"Where are you going?"

"On business," said Grimes.

"What business?"

Grimes was about to give an angry reply, but the affair looked too serious, so he was compelled to mitigate his wrath. He hesitated for a moment, but at length concluded that the truth was the easiest statement to make and so he said, "I am going to see M. Nadar."

"M. Nadar?"

"Yes, about a balloon."

"A balloon?—aha," said the other. "A balloon? You would fly, would you? You would run away? Aha, you cannot escape so easily."

"There is nothing wrong in engaging a balloon," said Grimes. "M. Gambetta and others have gone in them."

"M. Gambetta is an honest and loyal citizen; but you, monsieur, are a traitor and a spy."

"A traitor, a spy? I am not," cried Grimes. "I am a friend of the French Republic."

"You are a Prussian spy," cried the other in excited and vehement tones.

"I am not," roared Grimes. "I am

a Republican."

"Bah! we know you. We have watched you. You have been denounced to us. We know you as one of Bismarck's agents, and we arrest you in the name of the Republic."

"Arrest!" cried Grimes, in fierce indignation,—"arrest me, an American citizen!"

"Monsieur, you are no more an American citizen than I am. You are a German. Your accent betrays you. Come, you are our prisoner. You must come with us. Remonstrance is useless."

At this, Grimes stood suffocated with rage. He glared like a wild beast at his enemies. He thrust his hand into his pocket, and grasped his trusty revolver, and for a moment he meditated a wild rush upon his captors and a headlong flight. He looked up and down the street; but that one look was enough to satisfy him that anything like flight was utterly impossible. He let go his grasp of his revolver.

The sight of the National Guards around a foreigner had already attracted the notice of the passers-by. People stopped and stared. The words "Prussian spy" were heard, and circulated from mouth to mouth. The crowd increased, and at length, in a marvellously short space of time, an immense number of people had gathered there. The rumor of a Prussian spy passed along the street, and people came running from every direction to see the sight.

As Grimes looked around, he saw the crowd, and the faces that were turned toward him were faces full of dark menace and intense hate. Passionate words passed from man to man, and reached his ears. He began to think that he was lost. Once more he subdued his wrath, and endeavored to appeal to the crowd.

"Gentlemen!" said he, elevating his voice, "I am an American citizen. I am a friend of the French Republic. I am a Republican myself. The Amer-

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murs arose. But the man who had seized Grimes turned with a shrug and called out, "Citizens, this man is a Prussian spy. He is very dangerous. We have been searching for him for weeks. He is the worst spy in the place, and the chief agent of Bismarck."

At these words there arose from the crowd a terrific outcry. Yells, shrieks, and execrations, in the midst of which were a hundred cries for immediate vengeance.

Grimes stood overwhelmed. He was a brave man, but the position in which he was made bravery useless. To defy, or to resist, or to offend that maddened mob was to be torn in pieces. He looked out once more upon them, and saw the faces inflamed with frantic rage and eyes glowing in fury. They were more like wild beasts than human beings. To disarm their wrath was impossible; to explain matters, to prove the truth, was not allowed. The mob outside was so insane and so passionate, that the National Guards who had arrested him seemed almost his friends now, since they stood between him and the savages of the street.

The conclusion which Grimes came to was swift and decided. He saw that it would never do to stand there exposed to the wrath of the mob: anything was better than that. With the National Guards there was at least a hope of something like an examination or a trial; but with a street mob there was nothing but a tiger's blind fury. His mind was made up. At all hazards, this scene must be stopped.

"Gentlemen!" said he, courteously, to the National Guards, speaking so that all could hear him, "there is some mistake. I am convinced that you intend nothing but what is fair and right. I trust myself to your hands. Take me to the authorities, and I will submit to any examination."

This was very magnanimous language from a man who was helpless; but the National Guards did not see way and endeavored to assume the airs of so many Rhadamanthuses. Those of the crowd who heard him were somewhat favorably affected, and began to think that there might be some mistake; but the most of them did not hear, and so they kept on howling.

"It's all right," said Grimes. "Let us go. Lead on. Don't be troubled about me. I won't run. It's all right, gentlemen," said he to the crowd. "It's only a mistake. I'm an American. *Vive la République Française!*"

These last words he shouted out in tones loud enough to be heard by all. The mob heard it, and those words arrested the current of the general fury. They had the right ring. They hesitated.

"It is a mistake," roared Grimes in stentorian tones, so that he could be heard by all. "I am an American. I am a Republican. Hurrah for the French Republic! Hurrah for liberty! Down with the Prussians! Down with Bismarck! I am an American Republican, and I love the French Republic!"

As a matter of fact Grimes began to be somewhat disgusted with the French Republic, or rather with French Republicans, and consequently his words were not strictly true; but he was in a very tight place, and he felt that it was his first duty to disarm the vengeance of that howling maniac mob. By giving them lavish doses of the popular cries, he hoped to succeed in this. His efforts were not unavailing. A large number of the crowd caught up his words and responded. The mob, as a mob, began to lose its homogeneity; its unity disintegrated at the impact of those cries; some kept up the call for vengeance; but others hurrahed for the French Republic, and others again for America.

Grimes now moved off, surrounded by his captors and the mob.

The National Guards led him, and the crowd followed him, through many streets. The crowd still showed that

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created by the remarks of the prisoner, and followed in a vague way, being now rather curious than inimical. In this way he at length reached a large building, in front of which there were a few men in the uniform of the National Guard. Grimes entered this place with his captors and was conducted to a room in the third story. On being shown in here the door was locked and the prisoner was left to his meditations.

Meanwhile Carrol had left the house and had started off to seek out some way of wiling away the tedious hours. He had wandered aimlessly through the streets, trying to get rid of the hours of the morning, and finding himself incessantly gravitating in an irresistible manner toward the lodgings of Maud. He resisted this tendency as long as he could, for he did not wish to intrude upon the ladies at unseasonable hours; but at length he found it quite impossible to resist any longer. It was about midday when he found himself in the street in front of the house. He then made up his mind to remain in that street and keep up a watch over the house, with a vague idea that by so watching he might be the means of guarding the inmates from evil. For two or three hours he walked up and down the street, never going out of sight of the house; and at length he became wearied of this fruitless occupation, and began to think of entering.

Mrs. Lovell and Maud were both in the room. Maud started to her feet and stood looking at him with a pale and agitated face. Mrs. Lovell advanced and greeted him. Carrol was scarce conscious of her existence. He made some incoherent reply to her, and then turned toward Maud. She stood looking at him with that same expression of entreaty and wonder and mournfulness which he had so often seen in her face; and as he walked toward her she made one or two steps forward. But Carrol's face showed something very different from anything derstanding; it was full of joy and enthusiastic hope and tenderest affection. He hurried toward her and grasped her hand in both of his.

"O my darling!" he faltered in a low voice; "forgive me! forgive me!"

Mrs. Lovell started, and with some commonplace remark she left the room, and by that act won for herself the fervent gratitude of Carrol.

He was now alone with Maud. He understood at last the whole truth. There was at last no cloud of misunderstanding between them. Carrol was determined that everything should now be cleared up without delay, and so he poured forth the whole story of his sorrows. All was revealed without exception, and Maud was able to understand the whole reason of Carrol's conduct. Even if his explanation had been less ample, she could have forgiven him; but with this she felt that there was nothing to forgive.

Mrs. Lovell's innate delicacy of soul, together with her sisterly regard for Maud and her consideration of her peculiar circumstances, all combined to make her stand aloof and leave the two lovers to come to a full understanding by themselves. At length, however, the time seemed to be sufficient, and she returned, finding Maud's once melancholy face wreathed with smiles, and the face of Carrol in a similar condition.

By this time it was dusk. They began to talk of their approaching journey, and Carrol began to wonder why Grimes did not appear.

Suddenly, in the midst of this conversation, they all became aware of the tramp of feet on the stairway outside and along the hall toward the room. At that sound a feeling of fearful apprehension in one instant started up within the minds of all. The ladies turned pale, and Carrol started up to his feet in dismay.

The door opened without ceremony, and a number of men entered the room. They were dressed as National Guards.

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by the door. Others remained outside.

The man who advanced looked with sharp scrutiny at Carrol and at the ladies.

"Madame Lovelle," said he, in French, "which is Madame Lovelle?"

"What do you want?" said Mrs. Lovell, in English. "I am Mrs. Lovell."

"Pardon, madame," said the man, who seemed to be an officer, still speaking French; "I am charged with your arrest, in the name of the Republic." And he laid his hand lightly upon her shoulder.

Mrs. Lovell did not understand what he said, but his gesture was sufficiently intelligible. She shrank back in terror. Maud started with a cry, and flung her arms about her. Carrol sprang forward with a menacing gesture.

"Arrest this man," cried the officer, "he is the Prussian spy!"

At this three men came forward and seized Carrol, and at a gesture from the leader dragged him out at once.

"Madame," said the officer, turning to Mrs. Lovell, "you must come. You are my prisoner."

Mrs. Lovell did not understand the words, but she started back with a cry of despair.

"O Georgie! O my darling, darling Georgie!" cried Maud. "O, what can we do? What does it all mean?"

To this Mrs. Lovell made no reply whatever. She simply pressed Maud in her arms, and sobbed aloud in her anguish.

"Pardon, madame," said the officer, "but you must come." And he took her arm and drew her along after him. Maud clung to her, and Mrs. Lovell tried to cling to Maud. Then there followed a pitiable scene, — the sisters clinging to one another, the officer calling to his soldiers and tearing them from one another's arms.

Mrs. Lovell, half fainting, was dragged away by the soldiers; while

her also. The soldiers kept her back, and, thus repelled, she stood for a few moments staring at them with a white face of agony, still imploring them to take her too. The men did not understand her words, however, and they coolly went on with their task, which was to arrest in the name of the Republic Madame Lovelle and the Prussian spy. They dragged their prisoners toward the door. Maud stood for a few moments overcome with anguish; she had seen Carrol taken, and she now saw her sister dragged out after him. With a wild cry she rushed after Mrs. Lovell.

But Maud's strength had been severely tried during the last few weeks, and this sudden and overwhelming sorrow was too much for her. Her brain reeled, her limbs failed; and she had scarce taken three steps when she fell senseless on the floor.

XXIII.

FLIGHT.

THE meditations of Grimes during the first few minutes of his imprisonment were by no means pleasant. To have been arrested at any time would have been bad enough, but at such a time as this it was intolerable. What was worse, his captors were citizens of that great and glorious French Republic for which he had been so enthusiastic, and to which he had been seeking to devote his services. This was the unkindest cut of all, and it wounded him to the soul.

Grimes, however, was not the sort of man who could sit still and brood over his sufferings. He had a healthy and hearty animalism, which made him chafe under them, and move restlessly to and fro like a wild beast in his cage. His first impulse was to examine his prison and its surroundings, so as to see what prospects of escape there might be. The room itself was large and lofty, with tiled floor, and two tall

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street was too far down to be reached by any process of climbing. The house in which he was formed one in a range that extended all along the street, and, as far as he could judge from a hasty glance, was several additional stories in height.

Although the fact that he was not handcuffed was very gratifying, still he did not see any prospect of immediate escape. If he should be left in that room that night, he might be able to get away; but the night would be or might be too late. Mrs. Lovell would expect him at dusk, and what would she do if he failed her? What his prospects were he could not imagine, for he could not imagine why he had been arrested. Whether he would be summoned at once for examination, or made to wait, was equally uncertain. His experience of French ways made him incline to the belief that he would have to wait for two or three days. The whole thing seemed so abominably stupid to him, and so unmeaning, that it aggravated him all the more; for Grimes had a logical soul, and if there had been any motive whatever in his arrest, he would not have felt so utterly outraged. As it was, even prolonged and heavy swearing gave no relief; and he was compelled at last to take refuge in the silence of disgust.

What the ladies might do in the event of his missing the appointment, he could not conjecture. In the midst of his meditations, which occupied several hours, he was roused by the rattling of keys at the door. Grimes started, and looked up with eager expectation, for now his fate would be decided. His only thought was that he was about to be taken away for examination. Two men came in, one of whom carefully locked the door on the inside, and then turning looked at Grimes with a mocking smile.

It was Du Potiron. In an instant Grimes understood it all. The suggestions of Carrol as to Du Potiron's taking a speedy vengeance were in his face, there came over him a terrible anxiety about Mrs. Lovell; for now it was shown that Du Potiron's threats were not idle menaces; and the same force which had been used against him could be used with far greater effect against defenceless women. The only hope he had was that Du Potiron might not yet have denounced them, and that he might yet escape in time to save them.

Du Potiron's face was pale as usual, and below his kepi might be seen a bit of sticking-plaster, which no doubt covered the wound that he had received when Grimes knocked him down stairs. In his face there was a malice and triumphant malignancy that was quite demoniac. Grimes, however, looked at him calmly, and waited to see what he would do.

The other man, whom Du Potiron had no doubt brought with him for purposes of safety, looked very much like Du Potiron, only slightly inferior, suggesting the idea that he might be an admirer or follower of that great man. He had in his hands a pair of handcuffs, which were no doubt brought here to adorn the hands of Grimes. He also had some pieces of rope, which looked as though they were intended to bind him still more securely.

"Eh, bien monsieur," said Du Potiron, at last. "What you zink now? Hah? You laugh at me now, hah? You attack me now, will you? Hah? Ze table is turn. Eet ees your turn now. Tr-r-r-emblez!"

At this, which was spoken very rapidly, very fiercely, and with manifold gesticulation, Grimes made no reply, but sat watching Du Potiron, and occasionally looking at the other man. He was measuring their strength; he was cogitating as to the probability of others being in the hall outside; and listening to hear if there was any shuffling or sound of voices. But there was nothing of the kind, and Grimes began to meditate a desperate deed.

"You not belief," continued Du Pot-

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had come to crow over the fallen Samson, — "you not belief. Ah hah! You belief now? Hah? Madame Lovelle, she not belief; she belief now. Hah? Come, you are silent. You are dumb. Ha, ha."

And Du Potiron made a low, mocking bow, spreading out the palms of his hands; after which he raised himself, and once more regarded Grimes, who sat quite still, looking as before.

"Moi, I haf warn ze madame one, deux, tree fois. Mais see you, what ees it now; you are spies. You and ze madame, I haf denounce you bot to ze Central Committee of ze section, in ze nom sacre and august de la liberté. You haf been ze slaves of Bismarck, and conspire against ze security of la gr-r-r-rande République. I haf set ze loyal citoizens to watch, and you are discovaire. Voilà."

Du Potiron paused again to see if his taunts would elicit any reply, but Grimes still held his peace, and sat as before in the same attentive and thoughtful attitude.

"Aha," continued Du Potiron. "You fly in ze balloon? Hah? Monsieur Nadar. Hah? Ma foi. You wish you escape me. Aha? You not escape zees way so easy. I haf set my heart on vengeance, and I haf denounce you as ze enemy of ze sublime République. All ze disloyal must perish. La France will destroy ze tyrant, and ze oppressor, and ze despot. You sall not escape; ze madame sall not escape. I am implacable. Moi, I nevaire forgif, nevaire. You air doom!"

Du Potiron frowned in what he meant to be a terrible manner, shook his clenched fists with melodramatic energy against Grimes, and stood staring at him to watch the effect of his words.

"Aha," he burst out at last. "You say notin; you dumb; you preten to be calm. But are doom, and Madame Lovelle is doom, and you bot sall soffaire. I sall nevaire forgive. I am implacable, inflexible, inexorable. You are lost; zere is no hope, no possibilité you tr-r-r-emble?"

At this moment Grimes rose quickly, snatched his revolver from his pocket, advanced two steps, and seized Du Potiron by the throat so as to almost choke him, and levelled his pistol at the other man. The whole movement was so sudden and so unexpected, that both were taken by complete surprise.

"If you say a word, I 'll fire," said Grimes, in a low, stern voice, as he covered the other fellow with his pistol, and held Du Potiron's throat in his iron clutch. The other man did n't seem to require any such warning. His face was livid with terror; his knees shook; and the ropes and manacles fell upon the floor.

"Pick them up," said Grimes, whose Yankee French now came out uncommonly strong.

The man stooped tremblingly, and picked up the ropes and handcuffs.

"Bring them here."

The man obeyed.

"Now put them on this man," said Grimes. "If you don't, I 'll blow your brains out."

With these words he pushed Du Potiron around so that the other man could get at his hands, while he himself watched every movement. Du Potiron meanwhile had made a few contortions, but the suddenness of this attack, and its overwhelming character, deprived him of all force. The iron grasp on his throat almost suffocated him, and thus he stood perfectly helpless. The other man tremblingly took the handcuffs and put them on Du Potiron's hands.

"Now," said Grimes, "take off his cravat and tie it over his mouth, tight."

The man obeyed. The cravat was large enough to serve the purpose of a gag; and while the man was tying it on, Grimes tested it from time to time, making him tie it tighter, till at length it seemed to him to be safe enough.

Now Grimes seized a piece of rope, and warning Du Potiron not to move for his life, he made the other man turn

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tightly behind his back. After this he took his cravat, and gagged him in the same way that Du Potiron had been served.

But this was not enough. He wanted to put it out of the power of his two prisoners to move; so he made them both lie down, impressing his orders upon them by holding the muzzle of the pistol against the foreheads of each in succession. Resistance was useless. Both lay down, and Grimes, taking some more rope, bound the feet of each. He then made them stand up, fastened them back to back, and passed the end of the line securely around an iron rod that supported a heavy shelf on one side of the room.

All this had been done with a neatness and despatch that showed the practised hand. After the work was finished, Grimes restored his pistol to his pocket.

"Pardon," said he, somewhat grimly, "you will see that I must escape, and, in order to do that, I had to tie you in this way. I may not see you again, and so I will wish you every happiness in the world, and say, adieu."

With these words he turned away, and, picking up the keys which Du Potiron had dropped at the first onset, he went towards the door, and tried each one till he found the right one.

So far all had gone off well, but the question still remained, how was he to get out of the house. He saw that he could not go down stairs, and his idea was to ascend to the roof. His long meditations over balloons had made the upper regions of the air quite a natural subject for his mind to dwell upon, and he thought that if he once got up there he might be safe.

He opened the door cautiously and peeped out. The hall was empty.

He went out and listened. There was no sound at all. It seemed as though the upper stories of the house were not tenanted. The apartments, he thought, might be storerooms of some kind, or perhaps they were deserted on account of the siege. longer, so he locked the door behind him, put the keys in his pocket, and walked away with as little noise as possible. Finding that his boots creaked, he tore them off, and thrusting one in each side-pocket of his coat he hastened along the hall.

He soon reached the stairway. Looking up he found the coast clear, and looking down he saw the story below apparently deserted. He ran up the stairs, and continued ascending till he reached the topmost story. Here he found a step-ladder going up to the roof. Climbing this he raised a small trap-door which closed the opening, and stepped out upon the roof. Then he shut down the trap, and seating himself upon it he drew a long breath of relief, and looked around with a comprehensive stare, and then putting on his boots again he began to meditate over the situation.

The houses were flat roofed or almost flat, and were joined together so closely that he could walk on for a long distance without difficulty and without being seen from the street. The difficulty was how he was to get down again. This was a thing that he did not know exactly how to contrive. After some thought he decided on leaving this place. and going over the roofs of the houses; such a journey might reveal some practicable way of descending. He might find a ladder or a staging or something of that sort. He accordingly started off and walked on till he reached a corner house, where any further progress in that direction was impossible. He now turned to the right, where the row of houses still extended along the street, and traversed several of these. At length he saw something which suggested a way of escape in case of an emergency. It was a trap-door, something like the one through which he had passed. Here at least there seemed a way to get down, and it was the only way. All the other traps and skylights had been closed. He knelt down by this and looked down. He saw nothing but the

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decided to make his descent here. But to do so by daylight seemed too hazardous, and he thought it would be safer to wait till dusk. He seated himself here and kept a vigilant watch, ready if there appeared any signs of pursuit to plunge down and close the trap after him. But no signs of pursuit appeared, and Grimes thought pleasantly that his efforts to secure the prisoners had been crowned with complete success. They had been unable to free themselves, and had probably not received any visit from their comrades.

Two or three hours passed, and Grimes waited very patiently, feeling sure now that, if he only effected his escape, he would be able to be at the rendezvous in time. At length it grew sufficiently dark for his purpose, — just dark enough for safety, yet also sufficiently light for him to find his way. Once more he removed his boots and cautiously descended. As he reached the attic floor he listened, but heard nothing. Reassured, he descended farther. He met no one. He went farther and farther down, and now discovered that the house was uninhabited. By certain signs of disorder he thought that it had been visited by thieves, who had left the trap open. Reaching at length the door of the *conciergerie*, he found this locked, but another door had a key in the lock, and opening this he found himself in the court-yard, where he put on his boots again and looked around. Here a gate opened into the street, and was secured by a bar. Grimes removed this, and stepped forth into the street.

A cab was passing. He hailed it, and told the driver to take him to the Place de la Concorde. In due time he reached his destination, and, leaving the cab, he hurried off with a light heart toward Mrs. Lovell's lodgings.

The darkness had now increased, but the moon was shining, and the night was still. All things promised a propitious voyage. On reaching Mrs. Lovell's lodgings, he was surprised to her apartments, and he went on, full of confidence, till he reached them. All was still. The door was open. He entered with a strange feeling of apprehension. The moonbeams streamed in through the windows and illumined the interior.

Grimes saw nothing of the general appearance of things, his whole attention being arrested by one sight. It was the figure of a lady prostrate on the floor, lying in the moonlight, face downward. The heart of Grimes gave a wild throb, and he rushed forward and knelt by her side. He raised her up. Her face, but dimly visible in the moonlight, was half concealed by the disordered hair that had fallen across it. Her hands were cold.

Grimes was bewildered. He raised the lifeless form in his arms and kissed the pale forehead, the closed eyes, the cold lips.

What was he to do?

Send for help?

But the house seemed deserted. There was no help to be had. Besides, he dared not wait, for now he felt as though all the National Guards of Paris were on his track, headed by Du Potiron, who would lead them here first of all. Then both would be arrested. There was only one thing, — flight, instant, immediate!

It could only be a faint. She would recover. Ah! he saw it all. She had waited, and he had not come. Carrol had come, and in his impatience taken Miss Heathcote. Mrs. Lovell had still waited. She had been overcome with anxiety about him. She had not thought him false, but she had feared for his safety. She must have divined his arrest and his danger. The thought had been too dreadful.

Grimes's whole nature melted down into utter softness beneath the power of such piteous thoughts.

"We must fly," he murmured. "We must get to the balloon. She 'll revive when she gets up aloft."

Saying this he rose up, carrying the

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down to the street. There he got a cab, and drove to the Place St. Pierre. The lady still continued senseless. Grimes held her in his arms, and allowed himself to indulge in numberless tendernesses, feeling as though such acts and words as these were better adapted to win his loved one back to life than any quantity of the ordinary restoratives, such as burnt feather, cold water, and rubbings.

At last they reached the Place Bastille. A crowd was there. High in the air floated the dark outlines of two balloons, still held to the earth by their ropes, waiting for their passengers, struggling to be free. M. Nadar had been faithful. He rushed forward to the cab. Grimes emerged, carrying his precious burden.

"Haste! haste!" cried M. Nadar. "I 've been waiting an hour."

"Have the others come?" asked Grimes.

"No, not yet. Haste, haste."

Grimes was a little surprised, but his anxiety about his lifeless burden drove away other thoughts.

"This lady 's fainted," he said; "I want to restore her."

"She 'll revive," said M. Nadar; "if you wait now, you cannot go at all."

Grimes said nothing, but hurried to the balloon. He lifted the lady into the car. Then he got in himself.

"Are you ready?" asked M. Nadar.

"Wait," said Grimes, "my friends have not come."

M. Nadar fumed and fussed.

In a few moments a cab was seen hastening toward the place.

"They have come," said M. Nadar. "There is the cab. Are you ready?"

Grimes looked out. He saw the cab. He had no other thought than that this was Carrol and Miss Heathcote. He had a dread of Du Potiron and his National Guards.

"Yes," he said quickly.

In another moment the earth sank away, and the everlasting ether received him into its embrace.

A RESCUE.

CARROL had been seized and led away at the beginning of the disturbance consequent upon Mrs. Lovell's arrest, and had not therefore been an eyewitness of the distressing incidents connected with it. Upon him, the impression that was produced by this event was slightly different from the actual fact. When the soldiers entered, his only idea was that it was Maud, and not Mrs. Lovell, for whom they were come; and when he was dragged away the same idea was in his mind.

Such an idea was perfectly natural under the circumstances. In the first place, Carrol, as a matter of course, was morally incapable at that time of bringing his mind to bear upon any other thought than that of Maud. In the second place, a large part of their conversation that afternoon had referred to Du Potiron, for Maud had once more to explain the misdirected letters, and she had also much to tell about Du Potiron's persecution of her in Paris. She herself only knew this from Mrs. Lovell's narrative, but Carrol's idea was that she had been personally annoyed by it all along. She had alluded with some uneasiness to Du Potiron's threats, and they had discussed the possibility of his carrying those threats into execution.

Now, all was lost. Maud was seized. She would be in the power of this vile scoundrel, and no effort of his could possibly save her. This thought created an anguish of soul which could not indeed be greater than that which he had suffered from other causes during the last few weeks, but was certainly quite as great. His guards were too numerous for resistance to be possible. He was dragged along helplessly, almost mad with the emotions that had been wrought within him by this fearful revulsion from the highest bliss to the profoundest misery.

But Carrol, in spite of his highly emotional nature, was essentially a man of action, and wherever there was

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caught at it. It occurred to him that his only chance of escape now lay in winning over some one of his captors. But how was this to be done? He could not speak French, and besides there were too many of them; for even if any one should be willing to help him, he could not do so in the presence of the others. Under these circumstances a thought occurred to Carrol as a last resort, and he at once acted upon it. It was a very natural thought. He could not speak French, but some one of them might possibly speak English. This accomplishment was not uncommon in Paris. Any knowledge of English, however slight, would serve his purposes.

So he asked the soldiers nearest him, one after the other, if they spoke English. They shook their heads with the usual *comprend pas*. "Does any one speak English?" he said in a voice loud enough to be heard by all. At this one of those in front turned. As he was the only one of all of them that took any notice of this question, it seemed quite evident that he alone understood it.

"Do you speak English?" said Carrol.

"Oui, monsieur. Yes, I spik Inglis."

Carrol was much encouraged by the face of this man. It was not a high-toned face: it was the face of one who was corruptible, such a face as one often sees among the great population of couriers, cicerones, landlords, waiters, and policemen on the Continent, — the face that is associated with the crafty soul and the itching palm.

"I will give a thousand francs, anything, if you will help me and the lady to escape."

The man's eyes flashed, his countenance lighted up. He hesitated for a moment, and then said in a dry, business-like voice, "Oui, monsieur."

"What does he say?" asked one of the men, walking with him.

"O, nothing; he asked if his lodgings had been searched, and I told searched?"

"I don't know," said the other, "but it's as well to make him think so."

"So I supposed," said the first speaker.

Carrol said no more. This little incident took some of the load of anxiety off his mind. It was a small enough incident in itself, and a rascal like this was but a broken reed; yet Carrol could not avoid relying upon this rascal's fortunate rascality, and hoping much from it.

Not long after they reached their destination, which was not far from Mrs. Lovell's. The vast number of *quasi*-military men who now filled Paris rendered necessary a large number of depots for their accommodation, and for the reception of arms and stores. It was to one of these places that Carrol was taken. It was a large edifice, with a court-yard which was filled with baggage-wagons. As Carrol was taken up stairs, he noticed that there were few men to be seen, and from appearances he conjectured that the place was used as a storehouse for commissariat purposes. A single light was burning on each of the stairways which he ascended, and the long halls were dark and gloomy. Boxes and bundles of a miscellaneous description lay around, and other collections of the same kind could be seen in some of the rooms whose doors happened to be open. It was evidently not a regular prison, but merely used by his captors for that purpose, to save themselves trouble. This was a discovery which went still further to encourage him, for it led to the hope that he might not be very closely guarded.

In the mean time Mrs. Lovell had also been arrested in the way above described, and had been led away by her captors. Paralyzed by the suddenness of the event, and by the terror that lay before her, she was for some time almost in a state of unconsciousness. The despairing cry of Maud kept ringing in her ears, and added to her own despair. In her agitation

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to her captors, — expostulations, prayers, entreaties, — but all this met with no response of any kind. They did not treat her with any incivility; they led her along as considerately as was possible under such circumstances, but no effort was made to console her, or to alleviate her distress. About ten minutes after Carrol had been safely deposited in his allotted prison, Mrs. Lovell was conducted into the same house, and put into another room. Then the lock was turned, and she was left to her own meditations.

Gloomy and despairing indeed were those meditations. The room was perfectly dark, and she had not the remotest idea where she was. At first, the horror of her situation overwhelmed her, and she stood motionless, her heart beating wildly, and her brain filled with a thousand ideas of terror.

But at length other and better thoughts came; for, after all, she had a buoyant nature and a sanguine disposition, and now, in spite of the terrors of her position, these began slowly to assert themselves. First, she thought of Maud, and it was with a feeling of immense relief that she thought of her sister's not being arrested. Then her thoughts reverted to Mr. Grimes.

The moment that the stalwart figure of Mr. Grimes stood revealed to her mind's eye, that very moment a thousand hopeful considerations, a thousand encouraging ideas presented themselves. It was the time for Mr. Grimes to come. He would not be late. He must, she thought, even by this time have arrived. He would come there, he would see Maud, and would learn all that had happened. A smile of trust and hopefulness crossed her face as she thought of the eager and energetic way in which Grimes would fly to her rescue. First of all, he would convey Maud to a place of safety, where she would be altogether out of the reach of Du Potiron. Then he would institute a search after her. He would fly to her relief. He would come, and without delay. It surely would not be difficult for He would not leave her here to suffer in imprisonment and in anguish. He would surely come, — yes, even this night, and soon, before many hours, — yes, at any moment. At length, confident and expectant, she felt about the room in the dark till she found a chair, and, drawing this close to the door, she sat there, and watched, and listened, and waited for the appearance of Mr. Grimes.

Meanwhile Carrol had been securely deposited in his room, and had striven with the difficulties of his situation as he best could. There was, of course, only one ray of hope left, and that ray beamed from the rather villanous-looking eye of the man that was able to "spik Inglis." It was, naturally enough, rather a feeble ray; but feeble as it was, it served to throw a little light into the gloom of Carrol's prospects, and all his thoughts and hopes centred upon the possible appearance of this man. That appearance ought to take place on this night if it was going to occur at all; and so while Mrs. Lovell sat waiting for Mr. Grimes, Carrol was waiting with far less confidence, but with equal impatience, for his deliverer.

The thoughts of expectation were mingled with others. His mind constantly reverted to Maud. Where was she now, he thought. Perhaps she is in this very building, confined in a room like this, in the dark, full of despair. O, what bliss it would be if I could but appear to her at such a time as this, and save her from such a fate! This thought was so sweet, that he could scarce lose sight of it. To him it seemed inexpressibly pleasant. To save Maud now would be something that might atone for the anguish that she had endured on his account. What a glorious recompense! How the darkness of that old memory would be swallowed up in the sunlight of this new joy! So he sat there, and he brooded over this thought, and he longed with longing inexpressible that he might be able to do all this for Maud.

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of trust.

And the hours slowly passed, the hours of night.

Midnight came.

The peal of bells from the tower of a neighboring church announced this fact to both of the watchers. Mrs. Lovell gave a sigh of distress. Carrol gave a half-groan.

But scarce had the last stroke died away on the still night air, when Carrol's acute senses, which had been sharpened to an intense degree by his long watch, became aware of a soft shuffling sound along the hall outside.

He listened, breathless!

The sounds approached his room. They were low, shuffling, and regular.

They were footsteps.

As Carrol ascertained this fact, his heart stopped beating, and in the intensity of his anxiety he seemed turned to stone.

The footsteps drew nearer.

Then they reached the door.

Then there was a pause for a time, after which a key was noiselessly inserted, the bolt was drawn back, the door opened, and a voice said in a whisper, "Are you wake?"

"Yes," said Carrol in a low voice, scarce able to speak in the intensity of his excitement.

"S-s-s-st!" said the other in a low voice.

He now came softly in and shut the door behind him, turning the key again.

"I can safe you," said he in a whisper.

"The lady —" said Carrol in the same tone.

"She is here."

"In this house?" asked Carrol, as his heart gave a fierce throb of joy.

"Yes."

"She must be saved too."

"Yes, we sall safe her too," said the man.

"When? when?" asked Carrol, whose impatience was now intolerable.

"Come — come — let's go. I can't bear waiting any longer," said Carrol feverishly, in a scarce articulate whisper.

"Wait," said the man. "How mooch you gif me for dis?"

"Anything; anything, if you only save me —"

"But how mooch?"

"Anything," said Carrol hurriedly. "A thousand francs."

"You make him a tousand dollar," said the Frenchman.

"I will, I swear I will. Come."

"Mais, wait. How I know dat you sall gif it?"

"I 'm rich. I 've got plenty."

"When you gif him?"

"O, as soon as I can get it! To-morrow. Come, make haste."

"O, oui; plenty time. Mais, how I know I sall get him? Can you gif him dis night?"

"To-night; no, I must get it from my banker."

"Mais, eet ees too long to wait."

Carrol ground his teeth in rage and impatience.

"Here," he said, snatching his purse from his pocket, and thrusting it into the man's hand, "there are about a thousand francs in this. I swear to you, by all that 's holy, I 'll give you the rest the first thing to-morrow. You may stay with me till then, if you 're afraid."

The man took it, then he went to a corner of the room and knelt down. Then he drew a match, and, holding this in one hand, he looked over the contents of the purse by the light of the match, with a quick and practised glance. A few moments were enough. He extinguished the match and came back to Carrol.

"Dees sall do for de present," he said. "And now we sall go. But you mus take off your boots."

Carrol tore off his boots as quickly as he could.

"Gif me your hand," said the Frenchman. "I sall lead you to the lady, and den we sall all go together."

Carrol grasped the outstretched hand

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the room.

Mrs. Lovell listened and waited.

The midnight hour had tolled.

Time still went on.

At last she heard sounds outside, — shuffling sounds.

They approached her door!

"At last! O, at last!" she murmered. "O, how faithful! I knew he 'd come!"

The key was inserted, the door gently opened. Mrs. Lovell rose to her feet, and, trembling in every limb, she tottered forward, scarce able to stand, and utterly unable to speak, holding out her cold and tremulous hands eagerly and longingly.

Carrol's heart throbbed with wild and furious agitation. As the door opened he rushed forward. One step inside, and he encountered Mrs. Lovell.

He flung his arms around her in a fervid embrace. He pressed her again and again to his throbbing heart. For a few moments he was utterly unable to articulate one single sound. At last, as he held her once more to his heart, he murmured, "O my darling! O my darling!"

"I knew — you 'd come," sighed Mrs. Lovell in a scarce audible whisper.

"O my own dar — "

"S-s-s-st!" said the Frenchman in a low voice. "Make haste. We mus haste. Der is no time. Come, take my hand again, and I sall lead de way."

Carrol grasped Mrs. Lovell's hand and seized the Frenchman's. They went along the hall and down a flight of steps and into a long hall which went to the other end of the court-yard. Here they descended and reached a gate. But Mrs. Lovell was weak, and tnough she clung to Carrol she could not walk well. The intense excitement of that night had unnerved her.

Carrol murmured in her ear words of love and encouragement, and then raised her in his arms. She was a little woman, and not so heavy but that Carrol was able to carry her. But his own enthusiasm and joy; and Mrs. Lovell, utterly overcome by contending emotions, twined her arms about his neck, while her head sank upon his shoulder.

XXV.

AN OVERWHELMING DISCOVERY.

THE Frenchman now opened a door at the back of the house, and Carrol passed out into a street.

It was quite dark. The moon, which had been shining bright in the early part of the night, had gone down, and the sky was overcast. There were no lights burning in the street, nor were any visible in any of the houses. The siege had extinguished the one, and the lateness of the hour had extinguished the other.

Into this dark street Carrol passed, bearing his burden. Mrs. Lovell clung to him as though she were afraid that something might still occur to separate them; while Carrol, in his rapturous joy, forgot all danger, and had it not been for his sober, practical, and matter-of-fact guide, would have wandered at random, carrying his burden anywhere as long as he could move. But his sober, matter-of-fact guide had made other preparations so as to complete their escape, and thereby make his own reward the more sure.

"I haf a cab," said he. "Eet ees not far. You carre de lady some time yet, but not mooch. All araight. De next cornaire."

By this Carrol understood that his guide had given to his own performance a completeness that made it positively artistic. This allusion to a cab at once aroused him to the dangers around him and the excellence of the cab as a means of escape from it.

At the next corner they found a cab standing. The guide went forward and spoke mysteriously to the cabman. Then, as Carrol came up, he asked him where he wanted to go. Carrol hesitated for a moment. He thought of Mrs. Lovell's lodgings; but being still

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might be lurking there, and anxious above all to secure the safety of his dear companion, he mentioned the Hotel du Louvre. His idea was to drive there first, and on the following day to send word to Mrs. Lovell about the safety of Maud.

Giving this brief direction, he put down his precious burden, and tenderly lifted her into the cab. Then he followed himself. The door was shut. The guide took his seat beside the driver, and the cab drove off.

Carrol was now once more alone with his dear care. Her silence and her weakness excited his tenderest pity, while the rapturous thought that he had achieved her deliverance filled his whole soul. He flung his arms around her, and drew her close to him and held her there. Mrs. Lovell made no resistance. It was her deliverer who was thus lavishing his tenderness upon her. Her heart was filled with a sense of his devotion to her; and he had a way of appropriating her which she was unable and unwilling to resist.

Thus the cab drove on, and the two sat there, quite silent, each lost in the thoughts that were most natural to each mind. It was a moment of infinite tenderness, of mutual self-devotion, of soft and tranquil thoughts of bliss; in short, a supreme moment that only comes but once in a whole life.

"This is bliss unspeakable," thought Carrol. "What a wonderful life I have had all crowded into a few weeks! The most unutterable misery, and the most exalted happiness; the alternations of utter despair and seraphic joy. Now the darkness is lost in light, and Maud will lose the recollection of the grief that I have caused her in the remembrance of the joy that I have given her."

These were the thoughts that he had as he held her to his heart.

"How faithful and how true he is!" thought Mrs. Lovell; "and what a heart must I have had to have played so recklessly with such a Glorious Being! I knew he would come. I sat there, and But how it was that he could have ever managed to come, is something that I never shall understand. And there never was such another man in all the world. O, he is such an utter —" A sigh ended the unspoken sentence.

It was Carrol who first broke the silence.

He thought that his direction to go to the Hotel du Louvre ought to be announced to his companion. He had not thought of it since he gave it. He now thought that she ought to know, so as to have some idea of where she was. He also began now to remember the existence of Mrs. Lovell, and the idea occurred to him that some measures ought to be taken as soon as possible to effect a communication with her, so as to let her know the joyful event that had occurred.

This communication was destined to be effected much more quickly than he had supposed to be possible. With the motive that had just been explained, Carrol gave a long sigh, that was elicited simply and solely by utter happiness, and then for the first time began to speak aloud and in his ordinary voice.

"You know, darling," said he, "I ordered the driver to take us to the Hotel du Louvre, but I 've just thought that you might feel anxious about your sister, and would like to go to her first to let her know about your safety. Do you feel inclined to do so, or are you afraid?"

At the first sound of his voice thus audibly expressed, in his natural tones, Mrs. Lovell gave a little start, and then listened with a confused expression. The voice did not seem altogether familiar; she felt puzzled. The thing alarmed her; she did not say one word for some few moments. But as the voice ceased, her fears died out. She began to think that her brain must be affected. These wild suspicions seemed like delirium or madness. But the arms of her preserver were around her, and thus reassured her.

"O dear," she sighed, "I really think that I must be almost insane!

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O, I want to see poor, poor Maudie! I know that Maudie will be frightened almost to death! Poor, poor Maudie. O yes, let us drive as fast as possible to Maudie!"

This time it was Carrol's turn. He it was who gave the start. The sensation was his. That voice! It was not the voice of Maud. Who was this that spoke of "Maudie"? What did it mean?

Carrol's blood turned cold within his veins, a shudder passed through him, his heart stopped beating, his nerves tingled, his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth, and finally all the hairs of his head simultaneously and quite spontaneously rose up and stood on end.

His arms relaxed. He made an effort to withdraw them, and would have done so had he not been almost paralyzed by this new sensation.

What did it mean? Who could it be? Was there a mistake, or was he mad? Had the Frenchman taken him to the wrong woman? What a frightful and abhorrent and abominable idea! And where was Maud? And who in Heaven's name was this woman who talked about "Maudie"? A mistake? How could there be a mistake? He would not, could not believe it. But there must be a mistake. Could such things be?

Mrs. Lovell noticed the shudder that passed through her companion, and felt his arms relax, and observed his astonishing silence. She wondered at first, and then grew alarmed, thinking that the excitement of the search, for her, and the long anxiety, and the final rescue had at last overcome him.

"O," she cried in intense anxiety, "what's the matter? You seem ill? Are you not well? O, why are you so silent? Why do you tremble so? Why do you shudder? O, you are ill? O heavens! you have done so much for me that you are sinking under it. And O, how unhappy I am! And O, what *can* I do?"

any possibility of doubt. His worst suspicions were confirmed. The terrible fact appeared, full and undeniable.

It was not Maud!

This confirmation of his worst fears broke the spell that had fallen upon him. He tore himself away. He started back, and in a wild voice that was almost a yell shouted out, "What's all this? Who are you? What do you want?"

This act, and the sound of his voice, a second time sent a cold thrill of horror through Mrs. Lovell. She recoiled with a repugnance and an abhorrence as strong as that which animated Carrol, while a terror more dire and more dark took possession of her soul, quite overwhelming her.

"Who are you?" she said in a low moan, and with a wail of anguish, — the utter anguish of intensest fear.

"O great Heaven!" cried Carrol with an anguish as deep as hers.

"Who are you?" wailed Mrs. Lovell again, in the last extremity of her terror, — "who are you? O, who are you? What do you want? O, what do you want?"

These wails of anguish showed plainly to Carrol that this woman, whoever she was, had not intended to deceive him, but had been herself deceived. Strangely enough, he had not yet thought of the truth; for so entirely had the idea taken possession of his mind that it was Maud who had been arrested, and that Mrs. Lovell was safe from all danger, that he did not think of her. As to who it was he was not able to give a thought, so confused, so bewildered, and so overwhelmed was he. That poor brain of his had been sorely tried for many eventful weeks, and could not now be expected to be equal to the sudden demand that was made upon its overtasked energies.

He had but one thought, that of knowing the truth at once. On this he acted instantaneously.

He stopped the cab.

He tore open the door.

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She got out.

The Frenchman also got down from the box, animated by the one idea that had now become his ruling motive,—the idea of securing his pay.

It was dark. There were no lights in the streets or in the houses. Carrol and Mrs. Lovell remained undistinguishable to one another, though each stared hard at the other. Carrol now seemed to Mrs. Lovell to be not quite so tall as Grimes, but Carrol himself could make nothing out of Mrs. Lovell's appearance.

"Who are you?" asked Carrol, at length, in an excited voice. "This is all a terrible mistake."

At this question Mrs. Lovell was on the point of mentioning her name; but a sudden recollection of the events of her escape, the mutual endearments, and all that sort of thing, effectually deterred her.

"I—I—you—I—" she stammered, "that is, O dear! I thought you were somebody else. I thought you were Mr.—Mr.—Mr. Grimes."

"Mr. Grimes!"

At the mention of that name a flood of light poured into Carrol's soul. In a moment he understood it all. This lady was Mrs. Lovell. He saw the whole truth. Mrs. Lovell had been arrested also. He had stumbled upon her, and she had mistaken him for Mr. Grimes. About the naturalness of such a mistake he did not stop to think, for his thoughts were turned to his own affairs. If this was Mrs. Lovell, where was Maud? She was still in prison! In his wild excitement he took no further notice of Mrs. Lovell, but turned furiously upon his benefactor, the Frenchman.

"This is the wrong lady," said he, and his words remained fixed in Mrs. Lovell's memory afterwards; "where is the other one?"

"De oder one?"

"Yes, the other lady."

"De oder lady? Dere is no oder lady."

back, and rescue her, or I swear I won't pay you anything more. I swear I 'll give myself up again and inform about you."

"Mon Dieu!" cried the other, "I say dere is no oder. Dere vas only one lady took. Dis is de one. De oder lady faint. She stay in de house. No one touch her. You go to de house, and ask. She dere now, eef she haf not ron away."

"What is this?" cried Mrs. Lovell, who at last begun herself to understand the state of the case. "You are Mr. Carrol, are you not?"

She spoke rather coldly.

"I am," said Carrol stiffly.

Mrs. Lovell turned to the Frenchman.

"The other lady was not arrested, I think you said?"

"No, madame. I vas back to de house, she vas faint."

"Fainted? Poor darling Maudie!" cried Mrs. Lovell, who now became absorbed in that which had been so long the chief feeling of her heart,—her love for her sister,—"poor darling Maudie! O Mr. Carrol!" she continued, "we must go there at once; she may be there now alone, and in despair. O, come! I must go there at once."

She told the driver her address, and hurried back into the cab.

Mrs. Lovell's belief in the Frenchman's information changed the current of Carrol's thoughts. He now saw that Maud had not been arrested, and that Mrs. Lovell was the one. He saw that the only course left was to hasten without delay to the lodgings; and accordingly, after one or two more questions of the Frenchman, he reiterated Mrs. Lovell's directions and got back into the cab also.

The door was once more closed, and again the cab drove off.

The very same people now occupied the interior of the cab who had occupied it a short time before, but between their former relations and their present ones

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ized their mutual attitudes and turned their thoughts into a totally different channel. They sat now as far as possible away from one another. They felt an unspeakable mutual repugnance and repulsion, and by the intensity of their longing after the absent they measured their abhorrence of the present. Not a word was spoken. It was a situation in which words were a mockery.

Of the two, Mrs. Lovell's case was perhaps the worst. The thoughts of Carrol had reference to one alone, but her thoughts vibrated between two different beings, the one Mr. Grimes, the other Maud. About each she felt an equal anxiety. What had become of Mr. Grimes? How did it happen that this man Carrol, — a man for whom she never had felt any particular respect, a man whose influence over Maud only excited her wonder, — how did it happen that a man like this should surpass the glorious Grimes in daring and in devotion? How did it happen that he should have penetrated to her dungeon, while glorious Grimes had stood aloof? It was a thing which she found inexplicable, and the more she thought of it the more unable she felt to account for it.

In the midst of her anxieties she could not help feeling the bitterest mortification about the events of her escape. First of all, she detested this Carrol, nor could the thought that he had saved her disarm that resentment. Secondly, she felt a resentment against Grimes for the deep disappointment which he had caused her, and for the horrible mortification to which his delinquency had exposed her. The only thing which at this moment saved poor Grimes from sinking forever into the unfathomable depths of contempt in her estimation was the idea that he also might have fallen a victim to the vengeance of Du Potiron.

Carrol drew himself back as far as possible into one corner of the cab, was, if possible, more intense and persistent. And yet these two but a short time before had been clinging to one another with feelings of illimitable tenderness!

The cab drove on as it had driven before, and at length reached its destination. Carrol flung open the door and sprang out. A gentlemanly instinct came to him in the midst of his excitement, and he turned after two or three steps, with the intention of assisting Mrs. Lovell out. The magnanimous thought occurred to him that, in spite of all her faults and offences, she was, after all, Maud's sister. But Mrs. Lovell took no notice of him. To her Carrol was now a detestable being, — detestable, and that utterly. She quitted the cab unassisted, and hurried toward the house. Carrol hurried there also.

The aspect of the house struck them as being strange and drear and suspicious. What was stranger and more suspicious was the fact that the door was wide open. Mrs. Lovell entered first. The *concierge* was gone. The way was clear. It was dark inside, but Mrs. Lovell knew the way well enough to go in in the dark. Carrol followed her, guided by the sound of her footsteps, and keeping as close to her as possible.

On reaching the door of her apartments, Mrs. Lovell found it wide open. All was still; she faltered for a moment upon the threshold, as a terrible apprehension came to her mind; then overcoming this, she entered.

She said not a word, but walked on. The door leading into the room beyond was also wide open. It was the ordinary sitting-room, and beyond this was the bedroom. Mrs. Lovell walked on with a quaking heart till she reached the bedroom door. Then she stopped, quite overcome. Then she called, "Maudie!"

No answer!

"Maudie!" she cried again; "are you here?"

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and passed her hand over the bed. No one was there. Then she lighted a lamp. The room was empty. Then taking the lamp in her hand, she came back with white face and staring eyes to the outer apartment, where Carrol had been waiting in a state of inexpressible anxiety.

"Where is Maud?" he asked.

"She is not here," said Mrs. Lovell, in a low and tremulous voice; "and I — I am — awfully afraid."

"Let us search the house," said Carrol in a hoarse voice; "she may be somewhere about"

With these words he took the lamp from Mrs. Lovell, and the two walked away, searching for Maud. To their consternation they found all the rooms open. Not a soul was to be seen anywhere. No servants were to be found. All had gone. Madame Guimarin had gone; and as for Maud, there was not the slightest sign of her.

XXVI.

ANXIOUS INQUIRIES.

THE discovery that the house was absolutely deserted, and left thus with all the doors open and no occupants, filled both Mrs. Lovell and Carrol with equal terror. They went all through the house as though they still conceived it possible that Maud might lie concealed in some remote apartment. Faint indeed was their hope as they thus pursued their examination, but still such an examination was not so bad as utter and open despair; and so they continued it, even after all hope of finding her here had left them. During this search there was not the slightest thoughts of their own safety in the mind of either of them. So engrossed were they in their anxiety about Maud, that the idea of personal security was utterly forgotten, and they kept up their business of exploring the house just as

about Maud, had thoughts also of a similar nature about Grimes. With her fresh remembrance of Du Potiron's threats, and also of Du Potiron's sufferings, she could not help wondering whether he had not fallen a victim to that vengeance. Against him Du Potiron had a double cause of anger; for in the first place he was connected with her, and in the second place he had done an unpardonable wrong in the personal assault that he had made. All these thoughts came to her as she searched wearily, fearfully, and hopelessly about the house; till at length their weight oppressed her. She could not endure them. The hopeless search grew irksome, and finally she sat down in the hall, and gave herself up to the despairing thoughts that now took complete possession of her. As for Carrol, his state of mind was very similar. The resentment which he had felt against Mrs. Lovell for being the innocent cause of his disappointment had died away, and the one feeling left in his mind was that of inexpressible anxiety about Maud. In this feeling the two found a common bond of union and a common ground of sympathy, so that they were once more drawn together, in spite of the mutual aversion which recent events had created.

As Mrs. Lovell thus sank despairingly into her seat, Carrol stood in equal despair by her side, and for a long time not a word was spoken by either of them. Of the two Carrol was the first to rouse himself.

"Well," said he, "it seems to me that there is no need for us to remain here any longer. I think that we had better do something. Will you allow me to take you to the Hotel du Louvre, while I contiuue the search elsewhere?"

"Elsewhere?" said Mrs. Lovell. "What do you mean? Where will you look? Have you any idea of any place where information can be gained?"

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seems to me that I ought to be making a general search, though I confess I hardly know where. My idea just now is to take you back to the Hotel du Louvre, and then start off and try and find something, — whatever I could, — and I would let you know the result in the morning."

"It is of course, very natural," said Mrs. Lovell, calmly, "that you should wish to get rid of me, but I assure you that you shall do nothing of the kind: for, in the first place, I mean to continue the search; in the second place, I shall keep this cab in my employ; and, in the third place, I shall insist on your accompanying me. For we have the same object in view, and so it seems to me that we had better pursue it together. You can be of service to me, and therefore I ask you to go with me. If you refuse, I shall have to go alone. But knowing what I do of your relations to poor dear Maudie, I do not anticipate a refusal."

Upon this Carrol assured her that his only thought had been for her comfort, and that, if she felt inclined to continue the search for Maud, he would of course go with her.

"Very well," said Mrs. Lovell, "and now I will tell you what I have been thinking of since I came to this house. It is — a — Mr. Grimes. You see he was to come here to meet us, to make our departure together. Now, you know, when the soldiers came, they came to arrest *me*. M. Du Potiron threatened that and that only; so they came and took *me*. They took you also, and I think the reason of that was that you were mistaken for Mr. Grimes, who had, no doubt, been denounced along with me. I can account for your arrest in no other way.

"Well, you know, poor dear Maudie was not arrested; for this man, M. Du Potiron, you know, threatened to have me arrested, and to take poor dear Maudie himself. He may have been waiting outside for my arrest, and have taken away poor dear Maudie. There is one more thing that I have. It is this. You see, Mr. Grimes was to have come here for us; well, you know, we were arrested. Well, it was about the right time for Mr. Grimes to come; and if poor dear Maudie was not taken away, Mr. Grimes must have found her and learned from her what happened, and then taken her away. So the only way to find Maudie is to search after Mr. Grimes."

"Well," said Carrol, "there seems to be something in what you say. As to Grimes, I don't know exactly where to look for him, for he left our lodgings this morning for good, and he does n't seem to me the kind of man who would go quietly back there to sleep when he knew his friends were in danger."

"No," said Mrs. Lovell, in a decided voice, "he certainly cannot be sleeping. He is awake somewhere and trying to help — to help — us."

"Yes," said Carrol, "that 's a fact; and so it seems useless to hunt him up at our lodgings. The question then remains, where can we find him, or where can we find out about him."

Mrs. Lovell sat thinking now for some time. At last she spoke again. "Did Mr. Grimes say anything to you about what he intended to do to-day?"

"Well, yes, in a general way. He said positively that he was not coming back. He paid his bill and made some arrangements about his luggage, which was to be kept at the house till he should come for it at some future time, or send for it. Some of his valuables I know he had taken away the day before and left with M. Nadar, to be deposited by him in the balloon —"

"M. Nadar?"

"Yes. M. Nadar was to put this in the balloon in which Mr. Grimes was to go. It was something which was very light, yet very important to Mr. Grimes."

At this a strange thought occurred to Mrs. Lovell, a strange and to her at that moment a very affecting thought, opening up to her mind once more a

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tent the hostile suspicions that had begun to come to her.

"What is that?" she asked somewhat anxiously; "something, did you say, that Mr. Grimes had intended to take with him in the balloon, — something, did you say, that was very light, and yet very important?"

"Yes," said Carrol, who knew perfectly well what this was of which he spoke, yet did not like to mention either the thing itself or his knowledge of it to Mrs. Lovell. "Yes, something of importance to him, you know, that he wished to take with him, you know, but which was not of sufficient weight, you know, to make any difference in a balloon, you know."

"O yes," said Mrs. Lovell, in an absent way.

"Well," said Carrol, "as I was saying, he had taken this away the day before to M. Nadar, leaving directions that this should be placed in his balloon."

"In his balloon?" repeated Mrs. Lovell, absently, but with some emotion.

"Yes," said Carrol; "that is, you know, in the balloon that he intended to travel by, you know."

"O yes," said Mrs. Lovell.

"Well," said Carrol, "and so, you know, he left this morning with the intention of seeing that the balloons were made ready. You see he had not sufficient confidence in M. Nadar, and therefore wanted to be on the spot himself."

"And so you think he went there?" said Mrs. Lovell, with some anxiety.

"I have no doubt about it," said Carrol. "I know he went there, and I know, too, that he must have spent the whole day there; for, you see, he felt that the whole responsibility of this balloon voyage rested upon him, and so, you see, he was, very naturally, quite anxious that everything should be safe, — that is, as safe as possible."

"Yes," said Mrs. Lovell, "that is what he must have done."

and has probably come here in the evening."

"And in that case," said Mrs. Lovell, "he must have found Maudie. So you see it only proves what I said, that Mr. Grimes is the one whom we must first find. It seems to me that the best thing we can do is to drive to M. Nadar's and make inquiries."

"Yes," said Carrol, "but I suppose we may as well drive to my lodgings first, for it is just possible that he may be there."

To this Mrs. Lovell assented, and the two were soon seated in the cab again. On reaching his lodgings, Carrol waked the *concierge* with some difficulty, and learned that Grimes had not been there at all; so that now it only remained to drive to M. Nadar's.

On reaching M. Nadar's, they found all dark and still, and only obtained admission with extreme trouble. M. Nadar appeared after some delay, and Carrol made known his business as briefly as possible.

M. Nadar's information was full, complete, and final.

First. Monsieur Grimes had not been there at all that day.

Secondly. He had prepared the balloons according to promise, depositing M. Grimes's little package in his balloon, with other necessaries, and had the balloons ready in the Place St. Pierre at the appointed time.

Thirdly. After a long delay M. Grimes at length reached the place with a lady who had fainted. M. Grimes was very anxious to resuscitate her before starting, and to wait for his friends.

Fourthly. At length a cab appeared, which they supposed to be M. Grimes's friends. M. Nadar told him the lady would recover in the upper air, and asked him if he was ready. On receiving a reply in the affirmative, M. Nadar had cast off the lines.

Fifthly. But the cab did not contain the friends of M. Grimes; and M. Nadar, after waiting for them a long

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returned.

M. Nadar's visitors made suitable acknowledgments for this information, and returned to the cab and drove back to the Hotel du Louvre.

This information had been a crushing blow to both. Mrs. Lovell was speechless with indignation. It was bad enough that she should have suffered the humiliation of this disappointment, that her trust had been mocked and her holiest and tenderest feelings outraged. Bad enough this was; but to find that this had been done with such abominable accompaniments, and that Grimes, while vowing endless devotion to her, had coolly, calmly, and quietly taken some other woman with him and fled with her, — this was, indeed, an intolerable insult and wrong.

Who was this fainting lady about whom he had been so anxious, the one for whom he had given up good faith, and truth, and honor, and all that is most esteemed by high-minded men? Who was she, and what motive could Grimes have possibly had in devoting himself to herself, if another held so much power over him? To think of Grimes as a gay Lothario was absurd, yet from any other point of view his conduct was most inexplicable.

While Mrs. Lovell thus suffered the pangs of wrath and jealousy, Carrol was more than ever disturbed about Maud. Her disappearance was a terrible blow. He did not know where to search for her, or what to do. At length his thoughts reverted to one fact in the narrative of M. Nadar, and that was the mention of the lady who had fainted. Grimes had taken a lady in this state into the balloon, and Carrol now recollected what the guide had said of Maud. She too had fainted. Could the fainting lady of Grimes be Maud? The more he thought of it, the more probable it seemed. He mentioned his suspicions to Mrs. Lovell.

But Mrs. Lovell scouted the idea.

"Maudie! Impossible! What would Mr. Grimes want of Maudie? and in surd. Why, Mr. Grimes would wait till Maudie recovered, so as to find out what had happened. No," concluded Mrs. Lovell, bitterly, "it was some strange lady."

"But Grimes did n't know any ladies in Paris at all, except you and — and Miss Heathcote."

Mrs. Lovell shook her head obstinately, but said nothing.

At length the cab stopped, and Carrol once more questioned the guide about what he had seen in the house after the arrest.

The guide's story was the same as before, without any alteration.

To Carrol there now seemed no doubt about it. Grimes must have gone to the house and found Maud there. He must have taken her, not only away from the house, but into the balloon. Into the balloon! and, if so, where were they now? Into what peril had he borne her in his wild flight? What did he mean? It seemed a thing so terrible, so hazardous, so frantic, and so unintelligible, that Carrol was bewildered.

He dismissed the cabman and took Mrs. Lovell to the hotel. But for neither of them was there any sleep. Mrs. Lovell in her drear solitude wailed for her lost sister, and thought with speechless indignation of the baseness of the man in whom she had trusted. He had deceived her, he had broken his faith and stained his honor. He now deserved only her limitless contempt.

XXVII.

IN SPACE.

As the word was given, the balloon shot up into the air, and ascended to a great height. For this was one necessity at this time and in this place, that in effecting an escape from Paris the balloon should shoot up to as great a height as possible, so as to be out of the reach of Prussian bullets. By day, of course, this would be very difficult; but by night, even amid moonlight, it

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mile was considered sufficient.

Grimes was looking over the side of the balloon when he had seen the cab coming, and had called out in answer to Nadar. The first thing that he was conscious of after this was the astonishing movement of the firm-set earth from beneath him. The crowd in the place below fell away from him, leaving him poised in space. In spite of the efforts that he had made to familiarize himself with the practical details of aerostation, there was an inevitable novelty connected with his present position, which fairly made his brain whirl, and his stout frame tingle through every fibre. His sensations were like those which Phaeton may have had when he had traversed the first few furlongs of his aerial way, or like those which some adventurous yet inexperienced driver of a four-in-hand may have when he finds that his team is bounding away from beneath his control.

So Grimes folded his arms, knit his brows, set his teeth, drew a long breath, and then looked up. Overhead was a network of rigging, the strands that held the car to that buoyant mass that raised it in the air, while beyond this was a great globe, black and shadowy, whose capacious dimensions seemed enlarged to tremendous proportions, shutting out the whole sky. It shut out that infinite expanse into which it was plunging, and the sparkle of the stars; and though its shadow was not projected into the car, yet the blackness of the great overhanging orb clothed it in gloom and darkness.

He now looked into the car, and turned his attention to those duties that immediately demanded his care. Inside this car there were bags of ballast, and two bales containing newspapers, the common burden of every balloon that left the besieged city. There was also a lacquered tin box with the name of Grimes painted on it, — a box of no particular weight, but which showed, from the care with

All this time the lady had not moved. Grimes had placed her in a sitting posture at the bottom of the car, with her back against the seat, and had hastily flung over her head one of the shawls which M. Nadar had put in the balloon. The moon was shining, but it was low down in the sky, so that the inside of the car was in shadow, and the lady was but faintly visible. The shawl also that had been thrown over her concealed her face and outline. Grimes, in turning to consider his duties, thought first of all of her, and, stooping over her, he felt her hands and her pulse. She was still senseless, and Grimes now began to be so anxious about her that the recent feeling of awe that had come over him as he first bounded into space gave way to a tender and all-engrossing care for the safety and recovery of the loved one.

With loving hands he drew back the shawl a little from her face. That face was concealed by the shadow of the side of the car, and by the deeper shadow of the overhanging shawl, so that the loved features were not very distinctly revealed. Grimes held his cheek close to her lips, but no breathing, however faint, was perceptible. He began to feel a stronger and deeper care, and to regret that he had left Paris without first having her restored to sense. He sighed heavily, and then kissed with infinite tenderness the unconscious being who was so dear to him. Then with gentle hands he drew the shawl once more over the face, so as to protect her from the night air, and began to rub and chafe the hands.

At this work he continued for what seemed to him a long time, quite forgetful of everything but the work upon which he was engaged, and as careless about the balloon as though there was an aeronaut with him attending to the navigation of the aerial craft. But his work seemed unavailing, and no response of any kind was made, nor did any favorable signs appear. At length

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his voyage. To him it now seemed as if it ought to be almost time to descend. How long he had been at this employment he did not know, but it seemed long, and he must already be outside the beleaguering lines. He rose up and looked out.

To his surprise he was just passing over the suburbs of Paris. The vast extent of the city lay in the distance. To his far greater surprise the land beneath him, with its houses and trees and fields, was sweeping past at a rate of speed which seemed tremendous. He seemed to be very high above the earth, and he could only account for the rate of speed at which he was going on the ground that some strong wind had arisen since he left the city.

To his disappointment he saw that as yet he could not descend. For beneath him he saw the lines of the fortifications of the city, and beyond these the forts. On which side of the city he was, whether north, south, east, or west, he had not the faintest idea; and he was certainly not sufficiently familiar with the environs to form any correct opinion, even had he been closer to the ground. At that height there was a certain indistinctness in the outlines which would have puzzled even a native of the city.

As Grimes gazed upon the scene, he soon saw that though he might not descend just now, yet his descent could not possibly be delayed for very long. The tremendous rate at which the earth was driving past him would soon sweep away from under him all these lines of battle, the forts, the fortifications, and the armies of besieger and besieged. And even as he gazed he saw that this was the case. For there beneath him, faster and ever faster, the earth fled away; the lines of the besieged disappeared, other lines came into view, and arrays of flashing lights and blazing fires. Suddenly a loud report like a gun-shot sounded almost immediately beneath him, and the sharp quick crack had in it something of awful menace. What if he were beshould be fired, and a bullet pierce the black orb above him? The danger was altogether too terrific to be slighted. Higher and higher still he must go. Beneath was the hostile country, reaching for an unknown distance, and in passing over this he would be liable incessantly to the shots of the enemy. He might be on the thronged track of the Prussian Army; he might be driving east toward Germany. For the present he must go higher and higher. And now all thoughts of a speedy descent left him. His only thought was to escape from this immediate danger, and remain up as high and as long as possible.

Acting upon this idea he grasped two bags of ballast, and threw them out one after another. He then looked down. He saw a perceptible change. Individual objects beneath him grew far fainter and far more hazy, and soon it was difficult to distinguish anything at all. It seemed to him that on throwing out that ballast he had shot upward an immeasurable distance, and he was filled with astonishment at the exquisite delicacy of sensibility to weight which his balloon had thus manifested. He also was conscious of a slight pride, for this had been the first attempt of which he had been guilty at anything like management of the balloon, and the success which had attended his efforts caused a glow of calm self-satisfaction to pervade his being.

The moon was now so low on the horizon that it was beginning to sink behind the hills. From that horizon it shone fiery red, and clouds, or at least haze, seemed to accumulate there. Its red rays penetrated the sky, and threw themselves upon the rigging, and upon the great orb above, making it seem like some satellite as it thus gleamed with its borrowed robe of lurid red. But the lurid glow did not long endure. The moon sank farther and farther, until at last it went out of sight.

Now the darkness was deeper, and there came to Grimes a sense of desolation. The departure of the moon

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was intensely cold, and thought that he had gone too high. But he was afraid to descend for some time yet, and so he concluded to endure the cold as long as he could. Yet the intensity of the cold roused once more his anxiety for his senseless companion, and he stooped down with the intention of throwing over her some additional wraps. It was now so dark inside the car that nothing could be seen, but as Grimes stooped he heard a low moan and a slight movement. At this a thrill of joy passed through him. She had revived at last. She was herself at last; and the sudden and sharp cold had, no doubt, restored her to consciousness.

He listened again. The figure moved. She raised herself, and the shawl fell back from her face. But in the deep shadow of the car the lineaments of her face were not at all discernible, and Grimes saw nothing but a certain whiteness in the place where the pale face was upturned. And as he looked he felt a thrill of infinite pity and tenderness for the loved one, who now seemed so utterly dependent upon him. And this pity was all the deeper, and this tenderness the more pure and more profound, from the fact of their unparalleled position. Because of the silence of the night, and the majesty of the overhanging heavens, and the sublime solitude of the skies, and the far-reaching infinitude that bordered upon them, — for these and other reasons she seemed joined to him by the unity of a lofty fate, and by the imminence of a possible danger, which, if it did come, could be nothing less than a calamity of tremendous and unspeakable horror.

Grimes, therefore, was profoundly moved. He knelt down close beside her.

She looked up, and said nothing for some time.

"Where am I?" she asked at last in a voice of terror.

toward him, placed her head soothingly and tenderly upon his breast, and laid his hand upon it as a mother lays her hand upon the head of a feverish child.

Thus it was then that Maud had at length struggled up out of senselessness and back to consciousness. Sense had come but slowly, and when she first moved she felt bewildered; she lay for some time motionless, trying to collect her thoughts and recall the past. The shawl that was over her head shut out all the scene, and as the car seemed motionless to one within it, she had no other idea than that she was lying inside some house. Then at length her memory brought back the events that had preceded her swoon, and a shudder passed through her as she thought of them all. She pushed back the shawl, sat up, and looked around. It was quite dark, but not dark enough to prevent her from seeing the outline of the balloon. At first she thought that she was on the deck of a ship, for there was the rigging, and the orb of the balloon looked not unlike some distended sail. But as she looked longer other thoughts came, and the scene above her resolved itself slowly into what it really was. Then it was that she recollected the project of her flight with Carrol, and wondering how it had happened, and still full of anguish about him, she asked her mournful question.

And the answer came, in a low voice of love, soft and tender in its intonation, "With me." And then came around her the tender clasp of arms encircling her, and the gentle touch of a loving hand upon her head, as though that touch would reassure her and drive away every fear.

"With me": these words were like magic, they chased away every fear, and her whole being thrilled with joy. She forgot where she was, she thought nothing of the sight that had just disclosed itself above her, she thought only of those murmured words, and of the fond encircling clasp, and of

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whose throbbings she could hear.

And he was safe, after all! He had been arrested, but he had escaped. He had sought her once more, and had carried her off in this hurried flight. Small difference did it now make to her how she was flying, or whither she was flying, so long as she was with him, — now while she felt him upholding her and clinging to her with such fondness, such tenderness. Small need was there for words. The tide of joy that rushed through her heart took away from her the power of speech. But she had no occasion to speak. Her thoughts were too deep for words. This was joy and happiness enough to counterbalance the sorrow of the past, and he who had caused her poor heart such grief now threw all that grief into forgetfulness by the glory of the present joy.

And Grimes thought: After this I 'm willing to die. Life has nothing more to offer. I 've seen its ups and downs; have been at the deepest depths, and now am at the highest flight of human bliss. I 've saved her, — I 've saved her! I 've got nothing more now to hope for in life that can begin to come up to this in the way of pure, unmitigated, and superhuman glory!

And Maud thought: How sweet, how sweet it is! Is it not worth while to know sorrow, if only to be able to experience the joy that may be felt when that sorrow is removed? I wonder if there is any danger. Danger? I neither know nor care. I am willing to meet danger, or even death, so long as I know that he is with me. I could die at this moment, if only his arms should be around me.

Grimes was not altogether neglectful of practical things, in spite of his superhuman rapture. But these practical thoughts were simply variations upon the one theme. They were anxious desires to secure the comfort of his companion. He busied himself with arranging the wraps about her so as to made no remark. To her they only afforded fresh proofs of the love of Carrol, and consequently each endearing act only afforded her a fresh delight.

In the midst of her great happiness, however, there came one thought that gave her a passing care. It was the thought of Mrs. Lovell. What had become of her? Was she safe? This thought created a sudden agitation.

She removed the shawl from her face, and asked, in a low and agitated voice, "Oh! — my sister! — is she — is she safe?"

Grimes bent low over her and murmured, "Yes, darling, safe."

And drawing her closer to him he kissed fervently and tremulously the one whom he so fondly loved, pressing his lips to hers again and again. Maud murmured some unintelligible words, and with a final kiss, long drawn, rapturous, and never to be forgotten, Grimes drew once more the shawl over her face, and with a sigh of ecstasy restored that dear head to its former place.

The time that had elapsed had not been regarded by either. It seemed short, but it may have been hours. Grimes wondered about this, and tried to form an estimate; he could not. He now cast his eyes upward, and the sight that met them startled him.

The sight that met his eyes was the sight of utter nothingness. It was dark, but not intense darkness. It seemed rather to be an impenetrable and intensely gloomy mist. For a short distance up the outlines of the rigging were slightly perceptible, and then they faded out. He sat motionless and wondering; and now, as he sat and stared up, it seemed to grow darker and dimmer every moment, the shadows growing deeper, the obscurity more profound, the gloom more terrible. At last nothing at all could be seen, not the outlines of the rigging, not even the hand before his face; no visible thing remained; nothing was left but the blackness of darkness.

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change which had come over the face of the sky so swiftly, snatching from view all that could yet remain to connect them with the lower earth? From what arose this gloom so intense, this inky blackness that made all vision impossible? Such were the thoughts that came to Grimes, but these questions he was unable to answer. At first there was a vague idea in his mind that he had ascended so high that he had reached a place where all light failed and darkness was eternal; but this passed, and others came equally wild and equally unsatisfactory. Of all this Maud was perfectly ignorant, for the wraps that covered her head shut out all this scene. But as for Grimes, his surprise deepened into anxiety, and his anxiety became gradually more and more intolerable, until at length he had to make up his mind to tear himself away from the sweet communion which he was maintaining. But he wished to do so in a way that would not create any alarm in the mind of his companion. How to do this was very difficult, but it had to be done.

So he murmured a few words, speaking in a low voice, for the darkness and the deep drear silence produced an overpowering awe and hushed his voice to solemn tones. He therefore said something about "ropes" and "the balloon,' and then gently untwining his fond encircling grasp he tenderly laid Maud so as to let her lean against the seat in her old position, after which he rose to his feet, and, standing there, looked forth into space.

XXVIII.

THE SECRET PLACE OF THUNDER.

Out of the mutual endearments of softest tenderness, out of the ecstatic interchange of love and longing, out of the silent, voiceless rapture consequent upon that transition which had taken place from profoundest despair to loftier had drawn forth the started and now horror-stricken Grimes. He rose; he stood at the side of the car; and his hands clutched the side, as his head thrust itself forth, and his eyes sought to penetrate what was before him. But that which was before his eyes was a mockery to the eye, and the sense of vision struggled in vain to seize upon something that might yield an image, however vague, an impression, however faint.

So stood Grimes and looked forth into space. But his eyes encountered a wide waste, a drear nothingness, an impenetrable gloom, a darkness utter and inconceivable. It was the abomination of desolation. It was the abysm of the uncreate, the chaos of formless matter; a void direful, abhorrent, tremendous; a void where the darkness shut out all the light of hope, and where the shadow of death seemed to rest upon all beyond.

Now, had there been the fury of the storm mingling with that gloom, or had the wrath of the tempest been manifest, then there would have been something to mitigate the effect of that unparalleled outlook; for then there would have been something which could appeal to some sense, and in the beating of the blast, however pitiless, or in the howling of the tempest, however wrathful, there would have been some indication of the presence of nature and of nature's law. But here no movement arose amid the deep darkness, no wind swept through the void, no hurricane gave forth its voice. All was emptiness, motionless, still. It was as though he had reached the vast realms where chaos only rules, and where nature is unknown.

Yet in the midst of this terrific stillness the awe-struck gazer into space became at length conscious of sounds, and it was with something like relief that he detected that which showed that, though sight was useless, there still remained an occupation for other senses. It was a sound, distant, low,

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— a murmur, so faint that he fancied, more than once, that it might be the vibrations of the nerve within himself, rather than the actual waves of sound from without. But the persistency of the sound and its gradual increase showed at last that it was external; and as he listened it grew with startling rapidity, until at last it assumed the character of a steady sustained sound, a low, distant droning sound, of so peculiar a nature that it was quite impossible to attribute it to anything with which he was acquainted. This then was the only thing that indicated the existence of any external world, and to this he directed all his attention.

Poised in mid-air, away from the solid earth, severed from all familiar ties, the force of the wind that swept along was not perceived. All was stillness and quiet around, but the stillness and the quiet arose from nothing like the calm of nature. Nature, on the contrary, was at that time exerting her might, and all the air was in commotion; but the balloon was almost like the air itself, and was driven before the blast with a speed equal to that of the blast. So it was borne upon the wings of the wind, yet for that very reason there was no wind perceptible to him who sought to penetrate the gloom that surrounded him. Wind and tempest are only possible when they beat upon an obstacle; the balloon, however, was no obstacle, but drove along equal with the wind, with the tempest, and with the clouds.

And now the sound, the low, droning sound, drew nearer and nearer, and grew deeper and louder. At length it grew sufficiently definite in its tone to assume a resemblance to things that were familiar, and to Grimes, as he listened, it seemed as though some mighty wave was sweeping toward him, — some wave like the first of those vast surges that may be seen and heard as they sweep up the empty bed of the tidal rivers of America; it seemed thus like a rushing, rolling tide, sweeping toward him with tremendous and resistless force, or like the thunderous sound of some vast cataract, like the distant roar of Niagara, which to one approaching is at first a low drone, then a louder sound, until at last the full thunder of the waterfall is apparent to the ear. So to Grimes there came this ever-increasing sound, which grew and deepened and broadened, until at last it seemed as though beneath him and all around him there arose the sound of many waters.

He had no reason now to mourn over the absence of nature and of nature's works; for these sounds were at length unmistakable, and showed that it was no empty void, no chaos, that he was traversing, but the earth itself, his home, with its alternations of land and sea. And now he began to understand what was really the nature of that sound. Yes, it was the sea, and nothing else. He had been swept off the land and out to the sea. Time had fled rapidly indeed, while he had been sitting there, lost to all thoughts of the external world in the flood of tenderness and love; and thus he had allowed himself to be borne to where escape was perhaps impossible. By the short time that had elapsed since first he had heard the sound, he was able to estimate the speed of his flight, and to see that, instead of being poised motionless in some deep calm, he was in reality in the grasp of a terrible hurricane, that was driving him onward with tremendous swiftness in the path of its own progress; though where that path might lead his eyes failed to discern, as they struggled vainly to penetrate through the night, and the darkness, and the enveloping clouds.

The sea!

That was now the one thought that he possessed, the one thought that engrossed all others.

The sea! what sea?

There were several seas around France. Over which of these was he now driving? South was the Mediterranean. Was it indeed possible that time enough had elapsed to allow of

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lieve this. Had he been driving north then, and was this the British Channel? It might be so. Had he finally been driven west, and was this the Atlantic Ocean? That, indeed, was a thought of horror, yet the thing was only too possible. It seemed to him now that he must be over either the British Channel or else the ocean itself. Of these alternatives the latter meant utter ruin and despair; but the former left some room for hope and even consolation. To be hovering now over the Atlantic, to be sweeping helplessly away over its boundless expanse, driving off to the endless west over an endless sea, all this had such terrific meaning that it could not be entertained by the mind. He rather clung to hope. He chose rather to think that it was the narrower sea, and to hope that beyond the roaring of these waters and the rush of these waves there lay a land like that which he had left behind, where it might be possible to find an escape at last. Yet even if land should arise beyond the waters, could he now hope for escape? How could he descend in this storm? In what way could he hope to reach the solid earth, and not be dashed to pieces? To this he was unable to furnish any answer, and from the darkness and from the roaring sea there came no reply.

Meanwhile Maud had been reclining at the bottom of the car in the position in which Grimes had left her, leaning in as easy a position as possible against the side, and waiting to see what was to be done. The shawl which he had wrapped around her still covered her face, protecting her from the cold and from the damp. To her the balloon seemed motionless. To her the balloon did not avail to distract her thoughts from other subjects which now occupied her mind. For she was thinking of Carrol, of the misunderstanding that had arisen between them, of the dark alienation that had arisen, of the separation and astonishing meet- explanation and understanding. Above all she thought of this last incident in their mutual history, so wonderful, so unaccountable. She had seen him arrested; she had fallen to the floor, in her despair, senseless. She had been long unconscious, but had finally awaked to find herself with him, alone with him, out of the world, in the realms of the upper air.

She recalled every incident of that awakening. She thought how he had been roused by her movement and had come to her. She recalled his words of tenderness, his acts of devotion, his deep and all-absorbing love. His arms had been round her; she had reclined upon him; she had listened to his murmured words of love; she had felt his kisses upon her lips. What happiness, what bliss had been hers! What an ending was this to the sorrow that she had known! Such tender recollections as these were indeed overpowering, and it seemed to her that such happiness must be a dream.

And now, as she no longer felt his encircling arms, she began to feel a sense of loneliness. Where was he? Where had he gone? Why was he so silent? What was he doing? He had gone to arrange something connected with the balloon. What was his task? He made no sound. What had become of him? The deep silence became oppressive, and at length she became conscious of a low deep moan that seemed to sound from beneath her. To this she listened for some time, until at length she could endure it no longer, and began to feel uneasy at the silence. She felt deserted, and a wild fear of danger arose.

She started up and groped around with her hands. The car was not large, and in the darkness her hands touched Grimes, who was unable to repress a start and an exclamation of surprise. But the touch of her hand at once aroused him from the gloomy thoughts in which he had been indul-

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been forgotten. He drew her close to him, and, encircling her fondly with one arm, with the other hand he proceeded very anxiously and carefully to arrange the shawl about her head. He said nothing, however, for the solemn sense of peril was still uppermost in his mind, and he felt that if he spoke he would inevitably speak of this. But he wished to spare his dear love as far as possible all pain, all knowledge of danger; and he hoped yet that the danger might be passed, and that she might reach the land so pleasantly that no thought of the terrors of the journey should ever come to her mind. And so it was that Grimes held his tongue, and contented himself with acts of tender carefulness.

And now Maud, as she stood there, looked forth and saw that darkness and that gloom which had so impressed the stout heart of Grimes. It did not affect her so strongly, for she felt around her the arms of the man whom she loved; and in his encircling clasp there was a sweet sense of protection and of security. And so it was that her emotions at the scene before her were rather those of wonder and perplexity than actual terror. But, the longer she looked, the more did the idea of utter and intense darkness oppress her; and her sense of security grew gradually weaker, and there came over her the sense of awe. Beneath her she again heard, and this time far more impressively than before, the droning cadence of the waves; the sound of many waters, which, penetrating thus through the gloom to her ears, carried a certain dismal warning that awakened strange fears within her soul. She clung closer to Grimes. Her heart throbbed painfully, and at last even his protecting arms could not altogether repel the assault of the advancing terror.

"O, I'm afraid!" she moaned. "I'm *so* afraid!"

Grimes said nothing. He pressed her closer to his heart. His hand might secure her safety. His silence increased her fears. She shuddered. The darkness was around her, impenetrable, mysterious, dreadful; and the chill environment of the storm-clouds, and the dismal drone of distant seas, and the frailness of this aerial bark that thus held them suspended as they drifted through the air, all combined to weaken her confidence and to increase her terror.

"O, I'm afraid!" she murmured once again. "What will become of us?" And with a shudder she clung more closely to Grimes.

Now Grimes himself had been so overawed by the solemn presence of night and storm and darkness and the shadow of death, and he had experienced such direful emotions at the thought of that angry ocean that lay roaring beneath ready to ingulf them, that he had no words of consolation to offer, and nothing to say that might disarm the fears of another. He did not wish her to share his anxiety; but since she had gazed with her own eyes upon the terrors of the scene, he had nothing to offer by which those terrors could be disarmed. He could only follow the natural impulse of his heart, and clasp her closer to him, and say to her in low and loving tones, "O my darling! don't be afraid. *I*'m with you."

And at the sound of these low words of love Maud felt her fears lessen perceptibly; and as "perfect love casteth out fear," so now she rested on that love, and her fears faded away.

"Sit down again, darling," murmured Grimes; "I have to watch."

"Yes," sighed Maud, "I forgot. I'll try to be patient." And with these words she sat down in her former position at the bottom of the car. Grimes stooped over her, and arranged the wraps about her so as to secure her as far as possible from the cold of these upper regions, and from the chill of the clouds that enveloped them. But even as he bent over her, intent upon this

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rible position in which they were.

Once more Grimes arose to confront the peril of his situation, and to plan in his own mind some way of escape. Escape? How was it possible?

Shall I descend? thought he.

Descend?

But why should he descend? What was it that lay beneath him? Was it the ocean or the channel? This was the question, and how could he find any answer to that question? Was it the ocean or the channel? If the one, he was lost, and all his bright hopes shattered, and the blessed future torn forever away from his grasp; if the other, there was a chance, faint indeed, but still a chance of escape. Was it the ocean or the channel? Terrible question! Unanswerable problem!

Shall I pull the valve-string and descend?

Descend? Where? Why? Descend.? Why descend? To what place? For what purpose? Descend? Why, in any case a descent now could only mean a fall into the sea, and that sea just now, just here, even if it should happen to be the channel, could only serve one purpose, and that would be to ingulf them. To descend now, by night, in this darkness, in the midst of this wind that was driving them along with such speed, would be simple madness. It would be to tempt fate. It would be to court immediately a doom that by waiting longer might be averted, or at least delayed. Descend? No, the thought could not be entertained.

What then? Should he ascend?

This was a different thing altogether. It was a bolder question. A question, indeed, so bold that he might well pause before he decided upon adopting such a course. To descend was death; but to ascend, what was that? Was it death or safety?

Such were the thoughts that agitated the soul of Grimes.

And all the while there came up to his ears through the gloom, and never ceasing to remind him of the peril of the hour, and of the fate that lay in wait for him — and for her.

Had the balloon kept the same altitude, or had it been gradually descending? This thought came to him. He put his head over the side of the car and listened. There came to his ears the same drone of the waves, but whether he had descended lower or not he could not tell. For a long time now, as it seemed, though how long he could not tell, that sound had come forth from below; but though any exact estimate of his distance from the earth was impossible, yet the sound seemed near enough to suggest the propriety of putting a greater distance between him and it; and so as he arose once more to his former position, and asked himself the question, Shall I ascend? the noise of the waters below gave forth an answer that had an unmistakable meaning.

That meaning which he understood was, Ascend! Avoid us! Keep away, as far as possible, from our pitiless wrath!

And now as he finally asked himself the question, Shall I ascend? he answered, Yes, I must ascend. I will throw out more ballast. I will put a wider interval between me and the sea that menaces us so pitilessly.

Meanwhile Maud sat at the bottom of the car, listening and thinking, listening to the roar of the waves, thinking of Carrol. It seemed strange indeed to her, that, after their prolonged sorrow, they should be joined again, stranger still that they should be joined under such circumstances, but most strange and at the same time most sad, that, being thus joined, they should still be exposed to that merciless fate which, like a Nemesis, seemed ever to pursue them. For ever amid her meditations there came the sound of the waves of the sea, and that sound now signified to her mind nothing less

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complete destruction. It seemed as though the fate that had thus far pursued them was not yet wearied out, but was still following them with unchanged hostility and sleepless pertinacity.

The cold of the upper air and the chill of the enveloping clouds affected her, and she felt them through the shawls which were gathered about her; yet the chill grasp of the hand of Night was robbed of half its power by the hot and feverish influence of the thoughts that passed through her mind. Where were they going? What were they doing? Carrol had madly carried her off in the balloon; but did he understand the balloon, and did he know what was to be done in the dire emergency in which they now found themselves? Did he even understand the management of a balloon under ordinary circumstances? Understand! How could he? Had he ever been in a balloon before? To manage a balloon required experience; and what experience had Carrol ever been able to gain? And what was he doing now? or what was he thinking of as he stood up there aloof from her, striving to see into the darkness? She began to understand that he was puzzled and bewildered, and that he was trying to think of some way of effecting their escape. The thought filled her heart with despair, and as she considered his inexperience and ignorance the last hope of escape died out.

Shall I ascend or not?

Such was the thought of Grimes.

And now with inconceivable abruptness, bursting into the midst of the night, dashing all the dark aside and transforming in one moment all that impenetrable blackness to one universal glow of fiery red, there came a sudden flash, coming from no one direction, but flaming everywhere for a moment, and then dying out utterly. And then, before Grimes could collect his thoughts that had been scattered and dissipated by the shock of that lurid flash, there followed a long, deep all around them, and went volleying on through all the heavens in long reverberations.

Grimes stood motionless until the last peal of the long-reverberating thunder had died away in the distance. Then, at length, he knew what he was to do. In that long, deep, wrathful thunder-volley he had heard the answer to his question. From that answer there was no appeal. It sent forth to his ears a voice, menacing, gloomy, terrific, and even the stout heart of Grimes shrank back from the terrors of its presence. From this his one thought was now to fly; and he stooped down hastily and snatched at several of the ballast-bags, and hurled them out one after another.

Maud had not seen the red flash, for her head was infolded by the shawl; but she had heard the terrible thunder-peal. As its first low, rising sound came to her ears, she thought it was the surf beating upon some rocky shore upon which they were driving. Every nerve thrilled with horror; and she drew herself up with that instinctive movement by which one tries to prepare himself for some inevitable collision. But the collision did not come; and the sound deepened into grander volume till the thunder-peal made itself manifest to her. Yet this discovery lessened her horror not one whit. As well, she thought, might they be driving against the pitiless cliffs of an iron-bound shore, as to be up here in this place of terror, among the withering lightning-flashes, in the secret place of thunder. She was aware of Grimes's exertions, though she did not know what he was doing, and she felt the car oscillate beneath his movements.

She removed the shawl and looked up with a shudder of terrible apprehension, with the fear of one who expected to see Death itself. She said not a word. She looked, with all her being in her eyes.

And as she looked the gloomy folds of night and cloud and darkness that so long had environed them lessened

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ion, and the ropes of the rigging and the network, and the dark figure of the overhanging orb.

All these grew less shadowy and more substantial every moment, until at length something like the actual forms of tangible things could be seen, though as yet the gloom of night kept them indistinct. But beyond this her eyes saw a place where the gloom of night came not; for, looking over the edge of the car, her gaze wandered far away into distant space, and there from that remote infinity there shone full before her a clear, tranquil star. In its calm, cold ray her excited, feverish spirit seemed to sink to rest and quiet; and the light of the star showed her that the horror of great darkness had passed.

XXIX.

OVER THE CLOUDS AND OVER THE SEA.

THUS by throwing out that ballast the balloon had been elevated beyond the region of the storm into one of calm, or at least to one where the clouds did not follow. Grimes once more felt a momentary thrill of self-complacency at this second proof of his power to navigate the machine, but the anxieties of his position were too great to allow such a feeling to last. He was still as ignorant as ever of his whereabouts, and merely knew this, that the sea was beneath him, and between him and that sea a thunder-storm was raging.

For now there came up from beneath sights and sounds that showed him the full terrors of that place which he had left. Flashes of vivid, blinding lightning were flung out from time to time, throwing a ghastly glare over all. To Maud those flashes were terrible, and with renewed fear she once more covered up her head and so shut out the sight. Following close upon the lightning came the thunder, peal after peal in endless reverberations.

Grimes looked over the side of the car upon the scene beneath. There lay a vast abyss, without form, and void, of intense blackness; out from the midst of this abyss he saw the sudden flash of the lightning, now in long forked lines which seemed to pierce the whole misshapen mass with destructive fury, again in one sudden uplifting of universal light. After this followed the deafening thunder. To Grimes it seemed as though this scene of destruction was taking place on the earth itself, as though the world were going to ruin, and that the time had come for the consummation of all things; and though he on the wings of his balloon rode sublime in the crystalline sky, yet he would gladly have exchanged his exaltation for any place, however lowly, upon the solid earth beneath.

Now the deepest anxiety filled his heart. Where was he, and whither was he going? Was he still driving through space at a headlong speed? Was he continuing now on the same course as before? By the lightning-flashes he could see the rolling clouds; but, as far as he could judge, his course was the same as theirs. It was therefore probable that he was in the same current of wind with them, and was going in the same direction.

But where?

Terrific question! Where? How could he answer it? East, west, north, or south, to whatever point he might be driving, whether toward the pole, or the equator, to America or Asia, it was not possible for him to know; and how long would this continue? It could not continue forever, for he knew that there were limits to the duration of a balloon's flight. Every moment some portion of the gas escaped; it grew less and less buoyant; and at last a time would come when, after the last fragment of ballast had been thrown out, the balloon could rise no more, but begin its steady and un-

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the sea.

In vain the eyes of Grimes wandered around over every part of the sky. Nothing appeared that could convey any information. If he could but see any sign of land, no matter how bleak and bare it might be, if it was but the peak of some mountain, he would feel relief. But no land appeared; and out of that flaming abysm below no mountain-crest reared itself to meet his gaze. The night also, the long duration of this darkness, troubled him. This night seemed already to have lengthened itself out to an incredible extent; and still it was prolonging itself. Would it never end? Would morning never come? Amid this darkness it was impossible to decide upon any course of action, since his plans had to be made up in accordance with his surroundings; but now his surroundings were hid from view, and whether the sea was beneath him he could not tell. He could no longer hear the roar of waves, even though he tried hard in the occasional pauses between the thunder-peals. Perhaps he had traversed a narrow sea and was now over some land; perhaps he had gone up so far that the sound of the waves could not reach him; or perhaps his ears were so dulled by the thunder that the lesser sound of waves could not be distinguished. But whatever the cause was, he certainly could no longer hear that sound.

And now, as they drove along, the storm raged below as before; and Grimes still watched through the gloom, and Maud crouched in the bottom of the car, hiding her eyes from the lightning-flashes and closing her ears to the thunder-peals. The time seemed endless; and each hour, as it passed, lengthened itself out intolerably. Thus they remained, until at length Grimes began to notice that the lightning flashed less frequently, and that the thunder-peals followed each other with a longer interval between.

The subsidence of the storm aroused then the clouds might also be dissipated; and if he should survive till morning, the earth would not be shut out from his view. He would no longer be in danger of being again caught in the gloomy embrace of the cloud, the remembrance of which even yet made his heart grow cold. With hopes like these he still watched and listened patiently. And the lightning grew rarer and rarer, and the thunder less frequent and less loud, until at length both ceased altogether. But now the scene beneath was no longer lighted up by those vivid flashes which had formerly illumined it, and what lay there was to his sight once more a black abysm, a void of nothingness.

The hours of the night passed on. Maud remained silent and motionless. The storm had ceased, the lightning flashed no more, and the thunder-peals no longer sounded in her ears; but she did not move from her position, nor make a sign. There were two strong feelings in her heart that kept her quiet. One was a feeling of intense terror and apprehension. This journey amid the clouds and darkness, with the dread accompaniment of thunder and lightning, seemed to her mind unable to terminate in anything less than utter ruin. The other feeling was one of deep concern for her dear love, who now had the care of her upon his heart, and was standing there watching and waiting. Perhaps he was bewildered through his ignorance of balloon navigation; perhaps he was silent through despair; perhaps he had some plan, and was devoting all the energies of his mind and body toward carrying that plan into accomplishment. And thus Maud, in her terror for herself and in her love for her dear companion, remained motionless, through the conviction that if there was any possibility of safety it must depend upon her companion's perfect vigilance and absolute freedom from interruption. Well she knew that a word from her would bring him to her side; that at a

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get everything but her, and sit by her side with his arms encircling her as he had done when they first left Paris. To do that would be the maddest recklessness.. So she resolved to maintain a perfect quiet as far as possible, and neither by word or act to distract his attention.

And now the cessation of the storm had resulted in a quiet so profound that no sound was heard. The quiet reassured her, and gradually the haunting terror of her heart grew fainter. Gradually, too, the fatigue and the excitement through which she had passed produced their natural effect. She was worn out by the events of that day and night; and as the tremendous pressure of excitement and immediate terror was removed, her mind grew more at rest, and slowly she let herself sink into a light and gentle sleep.

Thus Maud at length slept; but Grimes still watched, and the hours of the night passed slowly on. More than once he had been surprised at the stillness of Maud, and had stooped down, fearing that she might have again fainted. The first time he took Maud's hand, and she returned a gentle pressure without saying a word. The next time she gave no pressure of her hand; but her hand was warm, and by her gentle and regular breathing he knew that she was asleep. This assurance gave him intense delight, for his chief trouble all along was the fear lest his dear love might be suffering.

Thus the hours passed. At length Grimes saw a faint glow of light on the horizon, and hailed with joy the appearance of the dawn. On that quarter lay the east; but it was impossible to tell, even by that assistance, in what direction he was going; still day was coming, and soon it would be light, and then all would be revealed. He therefore fixed his eyes hungrily upon that eastern sky, and watched with indescribable eagerness the faint glimmer of the dawn that appeared in that quarter. But the progress of the dawn seemed painfully slow; and again and again he in vain to fix them elsewhere. But there was about the dawn a glory and a charm that Grimes found resistless; and so, as often as he withdrew his eyes, they invariably wandered back again.

Time passed, and it grew steadily lighter. Grimes was now standing with his whole gaze and all his thoughts taken up in the contemplation of the eastern sky, when suddenly there came to his ears a faint plashing sound that made him start. It sounded like the dashing of water. He looked over the side of the car. Again the sound came to his ears, and yet again, yet nothing was visible to his eyes. Beneath him there was a dull, opaque gloom, in which nothing whatever was discernible; nor was he able to make out whether it was land, or sea, or the dense clouds which hours ago had stretched in flame and uproar beneath. Yet there was no mistake about the sound, and again the thought came that it might be the sea.

He had now something else to attract his gaze. The eastern sky lost its ascendency in his thoughts. The mystery beneath now arose to a prominent place. What was it? He leaned over, and strained his eager eyes into the gloom. He began to notice something like motion there. What was this motion? Was it rolling clouds, or was it the movement of waves? As he listened, he once or twice thought that the sounds seemed surprisingly near. At length the moving objects beneath him became more distinctly revealed in the increasing light; at length he saw the movement all beneath and around him, regular and recurrent, while the sound that accompanied that movement was the sound of dashing waves, of boiling surges, and of foaming, seething billows.

Yes, it was the sea.

Suddenly all was revealed. To his utter amazement he saw that this sea was immediately beneath him. He could see it at last distinctly. Not

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loon was scudding with the speed of the storm-wind over its surface. A moment before it seemed as though the balloon was motionless in a calm. Now he perceived that it was rushing along at a rate of speed such as the hurricane alone may attain.

He understood all now in a moment. The balloon had been losing its buoyancy, and had been gradually descending for hours. He had just noticed this in time. What should he do now? Should he arrest that flight? But how? He had heard of aeronauts throwing out a rope and allowing it to trail in the water. This he thought of, but saw no rope that was adapted for his purpose. There was only one thing left, and that was to lighten the balloon and once more ascend. He threw out several bags of ballast, and the balloon arose once more, and passed up so high that the sight and the sound of the sea was left behind.

But the day was coming on, and soon the sea would reappear in the gathering light. Steadily that light now increased. Grimes watched the scene beneath, and gradually beheld it assume the form of waves, no longer lying close beneath him and sending the din of its billows up to his ears, but far away below, at an immense distance, — so far that, as the waves became defined in the increasing light, they assumed the appearance of wrinkles upon the surface of the water.

The light grew stronger. Day advanced. At last the daylight conquered the darkness; and though the sun was not yet up, still the whole scene beneath him was revealed to the gaze of Grimes.

There was the sea. All around, the horizon. Upon that horizon no signs of land were visible. At one point which lay to the north there was an accumulation of clouds, but what they concealed he could not know. It was the sea, but what sea?

Not the channel, for now he saw that not water. Could it be the Mediterranean? He thought not, for he had heard the sound of the surf too soon to have had time to reach that sea. What then? Only one thing remained. It must be the Atlantic.

This thought had once before come to him, and he had struggled with it; but now it came again, full, clear, manifest, and attested by the evidence of his senses. At this confirmation of his worst fears he stood perfectly overwhelmed, staring at the world-wide ocean. In one place he saw a ship many miles away, but it grew fainter and fainter.

There was now only one thought in his mind.

The Atlantic!

That meant utter destruction. There was now not one ray of hope. He could do no more. What remained? Nothing but to meet his fate like a man. But since life had thus run out, why should he not enjoy its last brief moments; or why, since he had so short a time left to live, should he keep himself any longer apart from that dear one over whom his soul yearned with such intense fondness.

So you see, with his soul yearning with this intense fondness, and his heart throbbing with its great love, he stooped down, and, stealing his hand under the shawl that enveloped Maud's head, he took her little hand in his, and sat looking at her with a face full of unutterable love and longing, with all the deep and fervent love of his strong nature expressed upon his glowing face.

Maud in her light sleep felt that touch, and it thrilled through her. She waked at once, but the touch was so sweet, and reminded her so tenderly of her dear fond lover, that she remained motionless for some little time, just for the sake of prolonging that exquisite sentiment of bliss and ecstasy. For it was *his* hand. *He* was here. *He* was by her side. *He* was all her own. She did not give one thought to the

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them were in a balloon, and interchanging their feelings in space. Of the balloon and of space she had no thought. It was her sweet, sweet love only, and the fond encircling clasp of that dear hand.

And now Grimes longed to feast his eyes with a sight of that dear face whose exquisite lineaments were impressed indelibly upon his memory. So he reached forth his other hand, and began gently, and lovingly, and tenderly, to draw aside the shawl which enveloped that face, and concealed it from him. Maud felt the gesture; and as the shawl was slowly removed, she remained still, awaiting the moment when his dear hand, having withdrawn the veil, her eyes should gaze upon his adored face. At this prospect a delicious sense of expectation filled her mind; a sweet confusion gave a zest to her joy; and a delicate flush passed over her face.

The shawl was drawn away.

For an instant Maud sat with a flush mantling her exquisitely lovely face, and her eyes downcast, while a faint smile hovered around her lips. At length, in the full assurance of perfect happiness, she raised her eyes.

The blow of this discovery had already fallen upon Grimes. As he drew back the shawl he saw her face for the first time distinctly, and saw that it was Maud Heathcote. The blow was tremendous. He was stunned. He did n't think of anything. He did n't try to account for anything. He did n't wonder where Mrs. Lovell really was. He did n't have any thought at all. He was simply stunned.

And so it was that, when Maud, in the full assurance of perfect happiness, raised her eyes, this is what she saw.

She saw the man Grimes staring at her. He was still clutching her hand, and holding up the shawl. He was now rigid in that position as though petrified. His eyes were glassy, staring; opposite her, but seeing her not; while on his face there was an expression of dumb, inarticulate amazement; collapse; of a mind in a state of daze; the vacuity of thought; the look of a being who, having gone out of his senses, was approaching the regions of doddering imbecility.

As Maud looked upon this man the flush passed away from her face, and was succeeded by a ghastly pallor and an expression of dull and torpid terror; her ashen lips parted to utter a cry which yet did not escape them; with a frightful shudder she tore her hand away from his clasp, and flung herself back in a recoil of deadly abhorrence.

Of this Grimes took no notice; and so he sat, regarding her with his dazed eyes, while Maud sat staring at him in fixed and rigid horror.

XXX.

LAND HO!

THE two sat thus for some time staring at one another in silence. At length Maud's head fell forward, and burying her face in her hands she burst into a flood of tears. For the bitterness of this heart-breaking disappointment, and the abhorrence which she felt at finding Carrol exchanged for Grimes, and the despair which filled her as she now thought that Carrol after all must still be in the hands of his enemy, — all this was not equal to that anguish of shame that she felt as she thought of all the wealth of sweet and tender sentiment which she had lavished upon this hateful associate. The proud and sensitive soul of Maud experienced now the keenest sense of outraged dignity and wounded self-respect; nor could she forgive herself for the mistake which she had made so innocently.

Maud's outburst of passionate tears served to rouse Grimes from his stupor. He drew a very long breath; stared hard at her, as she sat with her head buried in her hands, and quivering with convulsive sobbings; drew another long breath; and then, without saying a word, he rose to his feet, and leaned

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turned away from her. Beneath him was the sea, above him was the sky, and nothing else was visible save in one part of the horizon where the clouds were gathered in giant masses, and white specks in the distance that looked like the sails of ships. But Grimes, who had a short time before been so keen to scrutinize the face of nature, and so vigilant in his watchfulness, was now blind to all these things that were spread out before his view. His eyes dwelt upon them, but he saw them not, for the thoughts that filled his mind shut out all perception of external nature.

For a long time each preserved this attitude and this silence. Maud sat sobbing. Grimes glared forth over the side of the car. Meanwhile the balloon drove onward, but Grimes paid no attention to this. He did not try to see, by watching his course over the waves, in what direction he might be borne; he did not notice whether he was descending again or not; to all this he remained indifferent, being absorbed in his own thoughts.

At length he turned around and surveyed Maud in silence. By this time he seemed to have overcome the emotions that he had felt. His bewilderment and intellectual stupor, born from that first moment of amazement, had now departed; he had quelled the tumult of his soul. Grimes was himself again; somewhat sad, it is true, almost despairing in fact, but still calm, self-contained, courageous, and capable of sympathizing now to any extent with the one who had so strangely become his companion in this flight.

Grimes turned thus, and stood regarding Maud for some time in silence. She, on her part, sat as before, but she too seemed calmer. Her convulsive sobs had ceased. She sat motionless and in silence.

Grimes cleared his throat, partly by way of preparing to speak, and partly also to rouse her attention.

"What I wish to remark," said Grimes, and he spoke in a very gentle ness and friendliness, — "what I wish to remark is this, that our peculiar position here requires the attention of both of us. I think you do not know that we are over the sea, and it strikes me that you 'd best know it now. I 'll agree of course to stand by you to the last, and save you if I die for it, just the same, and all the more p'r'aps, since I brought you here."

"My sister, my sister," said Maud, in a broken voice, and without raising her face.

"What of her?" asked Grimes, with an effort.

"Did you not say that she was safe?"

"When I said that she was safe, I thought I was speakin' to her of you. I meant that you were safe. I saw the cab come with Carrol and you, as I thought, to take the balloon. It must have been Carrol and her."

"O," said Maud with a low moan, "God grant that it may be so!"

"What do you mean?" said Grimes, startled by her tone of voice and her exclamation.

"You cannot possibly know it," said Maud, looking up at him with her pale face and sorrowful eyes; "you could not have known it, or you could never have made the mistake you did." She spoke calmly now, but it was the calm tone of utter hopelessness. "Du Potiron arrested her and Mr. Carrol."

"Du Potiron!" said Grimes, with something like a gasp. This was the first time he had heard of Mrs. Lovell's arrest.

"When I say Du Potiron, I don't mean that he came in person. He informed against her, and sent some soldiers. I suppose of course that he must have done it; no other one could have had any motive for doing it."

"Du Potiron!" cried Grimes again, quite unable to believe this.

Upon this Maud told him the whole story of the arrest, and of her fainting in her grief and terror.

All this was news to Grimes of course, and this story communicated

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Thoughts bitter, dark, and furious came to his mind. He could only blame himself. He had acted too hastily and blindly. He had done the very thing that he ought not to have done. He had fled from Paris at the very time when his presence was a thing of vital importance to Mrs. Lovell. Now she was in the power of a miscreant whose thirst for vengeance would be increased tenfold by the recent injuries received from him. And he had fled from her! Worse too, he had carried off her sister, this despairing girl, perhaps to destruction.

Maud now questioned him about the cab. This was her last hope. They might possibly have got away; and in that case they would naturally enough hurry to the rendezvous. But when she heard all that Grimes had to tell about the cab, she saw at once what faint grounds there were for believing that Carrol and her sister were in it; and once more she sank into despondency.

Now the silence was renewed, and once more they took refuge in their own thoughts. Grimes sat down, put his elbows on his knees, and, staring fixedly at the bottom of the car, he gave himself up to all the bitter thoughts that were naturally roused by the recollection of his mad and blind folly.

Maud had thus far remained in the one position. At length the stupor of grief and abhorrence into which she had at first been flung by the discovery of her mistake began to be mitigated, and was succeeded by thoughts that were perhaps less painful, but more lasting. These referred to the possible fate of Carrol and Mrs. Lovell. Over this she wearied herself in the endeavor to make some favorable conjecture, until at length the thoughts became intolerable, and she tried to distract her mind by something else. That distraction lay there above her and all around her, — in the open heavens of the sun threw a yellow lustre on the vast orb overhead. She looked up to this, and then, half in fear, half in curiosity, she arose, with the intention of looking forth. She did not go close to the side, but stood about in the middle of the car and looked over in that position. She saw the blue sky, and she saw the distant horizon. The sides of the car hid the rest from sight. She moved a little nearer, anxious to see more. As she moved the sea unfolded itself, — a wide waste of dark heaving waters, not bounding into billows or foaming in fierce, tempestuous surges, but undulating rather in irregular yet smooth masses like the upheaval of the sea that is caused by a distant storm. Maud ventured nearer to the edge, till she was able to look down and form some estimate of her position. But the sight made her giddy. It was too terrible. It filled her with fear. She shrank back, and her eyes rested upon the horizon and the overhanging sky.

Now she looked around the horizon, turning as she did so, in order to take in its whole circuit. She had surveyed about one half of that scene, when suddenly, as her glance swept on, it was arrested, and an involuntary cry escaped her, so abrupt, and so peculiar, that Grimes was roused from his profound abstraction.

He had been sitting motionless in the attitude already described, involved in his bitter thoughts and useless regrets, when Maud's sudden cry aroused him. He looked up. He saw her staring at something beyond the balloon. In a moment he started to his feet and looked also in the same direction.

Land!

In spite of the misery that filled the soul of Grimes he felt a strange and singular exultation at the sight that now met his eyes. It was land that he saw, a long coast lying directly before them. This, he thought, may have been that cloud or haze which he had

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was land then. The prospect filled him with new life, and all the energies of his nature were once more aroused. For an active and courageous man such as he was could not avoid feeling roused at the prospect that now lay before him.

The land was close by. They had been driving steadily toward it, while they had been giving themselves up to their feelings, and thus they had not observed it. It was only a few miles away. The shores arose very gradually; and the land seemed to be largely overspread with forests. In the distance arose lofty heights crowned with snow.

A short survey showed Grimes all this, and then a sudden fear came to him lest in the terrific speed of their career they might be dashed to pieces. His next thought was about what he ought to do, — should he let the balloon descend into the water near the shore and thus check its progress, or should he ascend still higher so as to choose his own place for making a descent on the land.

He sprang to the side of the car and looked down. His last look over the side had shown him the sea several thousand feet beneath. To his surprise he now beheld that sea not more than a hundred feet beneath. Another thing also increased his surprise. As he looked at the water he saw that the motion of the balloon, instead of being one of terrific speed, was in reality so slow that it did not seem faster that an ordinary walk. The wind then must have died away to the gentlest breeze. To land under such circumstances would be easy enough for the merest novice. There was nothing at all for him to do. He had only to let the balloon drift on, and make use of the first convenient place of descent that might present itself.

All this added to the excitement of Grimes, and filled him with hope. This hope, in its first rush, was as boundless as his despair had lately been.

"Cheer up, miss," said he, in his heartiness and generous enthusiasm, — "cheer up, miss. We 're all right; we 'll come out right side up after all. We 'll land there as easy as gettin' out of a wagon. Cheer up, miss. We 'll go back to Paris yet, and be there in time to save them. Only look over the side now, — see how gradual and gentle we move on. It 's like a walk. Why, a child might be here now and land there out of this balloon unassisted!"

In spite of Maud's deep dejection, the words of Grimes produced a very cheering effect. She could not be otherwise than excited and cheered at this sudden prospect of escape from a terrific fate. Encouraged by what Grimes had said, she ventured to look over the side, and what she saw was so entirely different from what she had imagined, that she had no fear at all, and not a particle of giddiness. They were so near the surface of the sea, that the distance down was nothing. She had imagined miles to lie between her and the earth, and she saw only a space that can be compared to the height of any common church steeple.

"Now don't you be a bit afraid," continued Grimes. "I 'll engage that you put your foot on that ground, and not harm a hair of your head. You only keep cool, and don't let yourself be excited, and we 'll be all right."

But little more was said. Each stood watching the land. They drew slowly and gradually nearer. As they drew nearer, they saw here and there openings in the forest, and farm-houses, and finally behind a hill they saw a church with a tower. The houses were all of humble structure, and the church was small. What land it might be they could not tell. The church showed them one thing, and that was that it was a Christian land at any rate. Could it be any part of the British coast? Could it be France? Grimes had even a wild idea of America, for this forest country with its clearings had certainly a strong suggestiveness of the New World.

Nearer they came and still nearer.

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land to which they were going. They saw that the shore before them was all covered with forests, and that the cleared lands were on one side and out of their course. Still they were not so distant but that they could easily reach them if they once descended.

The balloon moved on. The shore before them was a gradual declivity, covered with forest trees, and ascended steadily as it receded, until far away it rose into high hills, beyond which were those snow-covered mountains which they had seen when they first caught sight of the land.

Nearer and nearer.

They watched and waited.

And now Grimes laid his hand upon one of the grappling-irons so as to be ready to throw it out when he reached the proper place. At length the shore was reached, and slowly and majestically the aerial car conveyed them away from the limits of that terrible sea that they had traversed, into the domain of the friendly land. Over this they passed. Beneath them were the tops of the forest trees. Grimes thought of pulling the valve-rope, but restrained his hand and waited. Before them the land rose higher, and the tree-tops were on a level with the car. In the distance they rose far above that level.

At last!

The moment had come.

There was a rustling and a scraping sound, and then the car tilted slightly. The progress of the balloon was checked a little, but it still moved. "Catch hold of the car," said Grimes; "hold on tight." Maud did so. Grimes then threw out the grappling-iron and pulled at the valve-rope. The balloon stopped, and the vast orb lay along the tops of the forest trees, while the car sank down till it was stopped by the branches beneath. In a few minutes a peculiar smell arose, pungent, distressing, choking.

The car was now lying half on its side, resting upon some tree branches. The trees were lofty and were the kindred of those Miltonic

Of some tall ammiral."

"You must go down first," said Grimes, "and quick, too, or we'll be suffocated with this gas."

With these words he threw the shawl around her, passing it under Maud's arms, and over this he passed one end of a coil of rope which was in the car, then he helped her out upon the branch of the tree beneath, and Maud began to make the descent. It was not difficult, especially with the assistance of the rope, and in a short time she was on the solid ground. Grimes then hastily followed, and reached the ground nearly suffocated with the fumes of the gas. And he brought along with him the tin box.

They now walked back through the forest toward the shore, after which they turned off in the direction where the houses were. These they reached without difficulty. The people had seen the balloon, and were in a state of wild excitement. The men had gone into the woods toward the place where it seemed likely to fall, and only the women and children were left behind.

They regarded the balloonists with kindly and sympathetic faces, and Grimes at once began asking them questions in French.

They shook their heads and answered in a language which he had never heard before.

He tried English.

They shook their heads and spoke as before. Grimes's only idea at first was to know where they were, but this was the very thing that he could not know. He then made signs for something to eat. This met at once with a response, and he and Maud were taken to the best house in the settlement. He afterwards found out that it was the pastor's house. Here he was shown into a comfortable room, and was made to understand by signs that he should have something soon. Maud was conducted elsewhere by the kindly and sympathetic women. While waiting here, Grimes saw a box of matches on the

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it. A bright idea seized him. He took it up and read the label. To his amazement he read the name "Christiania," and Christiania he knew was in Norway, so that this land must be Norway.

The good people soon furnished a bounteous repast, at which the fugitives, in spite of their anxieties, were able to satisfy the cravings of hunger. By the time their meal was finished the pastor returned. He had been off with the rest after the balloon, which had been brought back in safety. The pastor spoke English; and at once Grimes was able to find out the facts of the case. It was true that he was in Norway. Thus in that dread voyage he had traversed the wide seas, and landed here. A slight variation of the wind might have carried them to the Polar Sea. It was nine o'clock when they descended, and about eight when they left, so that the whole journey of nearly nine hundred miles had been made in thirteen hours.

XXXI.

OUT OF PRISON.

After his recent danger Carrol did not feel safe, nor was he inclined to allow himself to become the helpless victim of Du Potiron and his friends. Under these circumstances he endeavored to find some way of securing safety for himself and Mrs. Lovell. There was no possibility of doing this, however, in any regular way, for all things were now in an irregular condition, and lawlessness prevailed to a greater or less extent. One only hope presented itself; and that was to hide himself under the ample wing of the American eagle, or, in other words, to put himself under the protection of the American minister, who alone of all the diplomatic corps remained in Paris. There was absolutely no other to whom he could look for help, and so he went to the American embassy. The great rush was at last over; most of the cared for as far as possible; and Carrol found a *queue* of not more than seventy-two people. After waiting patiently, his turn came, and he obtained an interview. At that interview he not only gained what he wished, but far more than he even had hoped. For he learned that the American minister, after long and arduous effort, had at length obtained from the Prussians permission for the departure of those Americans in Paris who might wish to go. Now Carrol was not a citizen of the United States, nor was Mrs. Lovell a citizeness; but both were Americans, the one by birth, the other by residence. The little difficulty was generously overlooked by the American embassy, and these applicants were accepted as coming under the Prussian permit, in letter, if not in spirit. Notice was given Carrol of the time appointed for the departure of the favored ones, and of the place at which they were to assemble; and thus that flight upon which Grimes had ventured at such terrible risk, Carrol was able to undertake with the prospect of perfect safety.

Such good news as this roused Mrs. Lovell from her distress, and restored something like her usual life and spirit. Her situation in Paris was full of danger; and the flight of Maud made her all the more eager to depart. Besides, out of the promptings of her jealousy there had arisen an intense desire to find out what had actually become of the fugitives.

Her intention was to go to England. Her dear papa lived there, a few miles away from Southampton. There was no other place to which she could go, and her old home now seemed like a haven of rest; there was the only place in which there was any hope of recovering from the distresses, anxieties, and afflictions of her lot; there, too, she would learn the fate of Maud, and if any calamity had occurred, she would at least be able to offer some consolation to her dear papa, and receive comfort and condolence from him.

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the Americans from Paris. It was quiet, and without any greater excitement than was naturally connected with the joy of escape from prison. As for Carrol and Mrs. Lovell, they made the journey in safety, and at length reached Southampton.

The country seat of Mr. Heathcote was not on the line of rail. To get there it was necessary to go about twenty miles, and then, leaving the rail, to take a carriage for the rest of the way, which was some ten or twelve miles. It was about noon when they reached Southampton, and late in the day when they left. After a ride of about twenty miles they reached the station mentioned, and left the train. They found themselves in a very beautiful little village, the most conspicuous objects in which were a fine old country church and an equally fine old inn. To this they directed their steps.

Mrs. Lovell was excessively fatigued, and at once was shown to a bedroom, where she intended to lie down and rest until it was time to go on. Carrol at once made inquiries about procuring a carriage.

To his great disgust, he learned that he could not procure one that evening, for the only one they had was already engaged by a gentleman who had arrived there that same day. The carriage had been away all day, and the gentleman was to have it the moment it returned.

Carrol was now at a loss what to do; so he sauntered up and down the village street, hoping that something might turn up to help him. But the more he thought, the more certain it seemed that they would have to remain here for the night.

In a restless and impatient state of mind he returned to the inn, and sauntered slowly into the parlor.

A fire was burning there which threw a cheerful glow about the apartment. A sofa was drawn up on one side of this, and on this sofa a lady was seated. Her elbow was resting on one cast, and so absorbed was she in her own thoughts that she took not the slightest notice of Carrol.

Carrol noticed her with a vague idea of the grace of this figure and the sadness of the beautiful face; but the next instant there came to his mind the shock of an astounding and overwhelming recognition. He uttered an involuntary cry, and stopped, unable to advance another step.

At the sound of this cry of amazement the lady started and looked up. As she saw Carrol, she too could not repress an exclamation. The next moment she sprang to her feet. Carrol rushed toward her and caught her in his arms.

"Maud! Maud! O my darling!"

"Paul! O Paul!"

For about five minutes there was nothing but a torrent of exclamations, expressive of every emotion of love, of tenderness, of joy, of wonder, and of rapture. After this there was a variation; and an equally profuse torrent of eager questions was poured forth, to which no answers were given by either, for each was too intent to ask about the other to satisfy the curiosity of that other.

But in the midst of this, another thought came to Maud.

"My sister. O my sister! O, where is she? Is she safe? O, is she safe?"

"Yes," said Carrol, "safe and perfectly well."

"O, thank God!" cried Maud. "But where is she? Is she here? O, tell me, is she here? O, I must see her, my darling, darling Georgie!"

And Maud started off, she had no idea where, with the vague hope of finding her sister outside.

But Carrol restrained her. He saw her movement with dismay. If Maud should once see Mrs. Lovell, he would certainly not see her again that night. So he tried to detain her a little longer.

"Wait," he said, — "wait, I implore

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see, Mrs. Lovell has n't slept any for three or four nights."

"O my poor, sweet darling!" sighed Maud.

"Well, you know, the moment she arrived here, she had to be taken at once to her room, so as to get a little sleep, you know; and it 's very important that she should, and you 'd better not burst suddenly upon her, you know, on account of the shock, and all that sort of thing, you know; for she 's exceedingly nervous just now,—but, that is, you know, of course you won't have to wait long. Just let her have an hour's sleep, and she 'll be all right; so, don't you think you can restrain your impatience?"

"O, I must, of course, if poor Georgie is so, poor darling! but I 'm awfully impatient, and only to think of her being in the house, why, it fairly drives me wild; but if she is trying to sleep, and so much depends on it, why, I suppose I can wait one hour, but O, may n't I just steal up, and take one little peep at the darling, just one peep, she sha' n't see me?"

But to this Carrol demurred, and he portrayed Mrs. Lovell's excessive nervousness and her need of sleep, and the dangers of a sudden shock, in such alarming colors that Maud was fairly frightened into waiting for a little while at least.

"Come," said Carrol, "do you think you feel strong enough for a little stroll? Come and let us get away from this public place, for I 'm crazy to hear how you got here. Will you come? And when we come back, you will be able to see your sister."

Maud demurred somewhat at this, but Carrol begged so hard, that at length she consented, on the understanding that they should not go out of sight of the inn, so that if anything happened she might return.

It was a lovely evening. They strolled along through the little village. All around was scenery of the most attractive description, where was presented all that could please the eye village the road was overhung by lofty trees; by its side a little streamlet ran, on the borders of which there was a rustic seat. Here Carrol persuaded Maud to sit down. Before them the brook babbled; in the distance were wooded hills; and, beyond these, the splendors of a sunset sky. In this situation Maud's stipulation about not going out of sight of the inn was not regarded very particularly; but they were at any rate not *very* far away, and they were on the edge of the little village.

Here Maud told Carrol the events of her astonishing journey, and that part of her story which referred to their adventures after landing in Norway may be briefly explained. The peasants had packed up the balloon, and the pastor had secured a conveyance for them to Christiania. Here they found the steamer about to leave for London, and had embarked in it. Their adventures had created a great sensation in that town; and Grimes had made the sensation permanent by presenting his balloon to the Museum. They had arrived at London the day before, and, after a night's rest, had come as far as this place, which they had reached at about two o'clock. Grimes had tried to get a carriage, but without success, as the only available one was off on a journey. He had waited for some hours in a desperate state of impatience; and about an hour ago he had told her that he was going to walk up the road in the direction in which the carriage was expected. So he was on that road now, either returning triumphantly in the carriage, or else toiling along impatiently on foot.

Carrol's story then followed, and thus all was explained. It may be as well to state that these narratives were not full and frank on either side; for each found certain reservations necessary; and therefore made no allusion to certain incidents, the remembrance of which was very strong in the minds of both, and could not be thought of without the consciousness on their

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tions.

Meanwhile Mrs. Lovell had been seeking for rest without finding it. The bedroom was chilly, and, after a vain effort to go to sleep, she determined to go in search of some more comfortable place. So she descended the stairs and entered the inn parlor. Here the comfortable air of the room and the cheerful glow of the fire formed an irresistible attraction. The room was low and large and cosey; the sofa was drawn up by the side of the fire, and seemed to be the very place that was best suited for her, — a place where she could obtain rest and warmth at once.

She took her position in the very place where Maud had recently been sitting, and the warmth and comfort of the room soon began to act most agreeably upon her. It was very quiet also. No noise was heard outside; no stamping footsteps arose inside to irritate her delicate nerves. She thought, to herself that this was the first moment of real comfort that she had known for several days. She thought too, with regret, that she must soon quit this pleasant place; for Carrol was seeking a conveyance, and it would soon be ready. Indeed, in anticipation of this she had come down with her wraps on, and she sat there by the fire all ready to start for her home at a moment's warning.

The fire was flickering in a dull way, and the darkness had increased to some extent, so that objects in the room were not very distinctly visible. Mrs. Lovell was sitting in such a way that her head was a little in the shadow, and not directly illuminated by the firelight. She was lost in thought, and at that moment those painful emotions which had been agitating her ever since the flight of Grimes were once more beginning to disturb her. In the midst of this the roll of carriage-wheels was heard outside. She thought at once that this was Carrol, and felt half vexed at the necessity that there ever, in the same position. Soon a footstep was heard in the room advancing toward her. Thinking it was Carrol, she did not look up, but sat looking down, lost in thought, and waiting for him to speak.

The new-comer now began to speak, and he did speak to some purpose.

"Wagon 's ready at last, miss," said this voice. "They 've changed horses. I stuck by them till they did it, and made them look sharp; and now, miss, all you 've got to do is to just jump in. I see you 've got your things on, and I 'm glad you 're so prepared. Come along then. I 'll see you, as I said, safe home, after which I 'll be in a position to bid you good by."

At the first sound of this voice, Mrs. Lovell started as though she had been shot, and looked up with as much amazement as that which Maud had felt at the sudden sight of Carrol. She looked up as he went on talking. He was not looking at her or anything else in particular, but was merely giving her this information. Besides, her face was in the shadow, so that it was not very particularly discernible. Mrs. Lovell looked up then and beheld the manly, the stalwart, and the familiar figure of Grimes. It was the face of Grimes that beamed before her, illuminated by the glow of the firelight. It was the voice of Grimes that addressed her and asked her to go with him.

But this was not all.

Her eyes, as they wandered over the face and form of Grimes, rested at last upon something which he was carrying in his left hand. This was a tin box, round in shape, that is to say cylindrical, lacquered, and bearing his name in large gilt letters. What was this box? What did it mean? What did it contain? Ah! did not her heart bound within her as it gave the answer to those questions? Had she not heard from Carrol about that tin box? How Grimes had deposited it in the balloon in Paris, as the only thing which he intended to take in the shape

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peared with it here, did it not show how, during all his mysterious flight, he must have clung to this? Was he not now clinging to it? Did she not hear him call her miss, thus evidently mistaking her for Maud, and speaking of good by? Maud then was nothing. Her jealousy had been baseless and absurd. By that which he grasped in his strong hand she knew that his heart was true, and in clinging to this she saw that he was clinging to that which in his estimation was the best representative of herself. What was that which he thus bore about with him and clung to with such tenacity? Her chignon. But that chignon now ceased to be a chignon. It became a sacred thing, hallowed by the deathless devotion of a true and constant heart. It became a glorious thing, since it had been glorified by its flight with him through the trackless realms of ether; it became a thing of beauty, a joy forever; in fact, it was the apotheosis of the chignon.

Mrs. Lovell saw exactly how things were. Grimes and Maud had made their journey in safety. By an amazing coincidence they had come to this place at the same time that she and Carrol had come. Maud must even now be here, for Grimes had evidently mistaken her for Maud. He had been procuring a carriage. It was all ready, and he was going to take her home.

And what then?

A wild idea arose in her mind, which had an irresistible attraction for one who was so whimsical. It was to take him at his word. He had mistaken her for Maud. Very good. She would be Maud. She would go with him. She would allow him to drive her home.

And Maud, — did no yearning thought about her arise in her heart? Did she not feel any longing to embrace that lost sister so tenderly loved, so lamented, who had been so wondrously preserved on such an unparalleled voyage? Not at all. In fact, made her feel quite at her ease about Maud. In the first place, she understood that Maud was well. In the second place, she had not yet got over her resentment, baseless though it was, against Maud, for her usurpation of her place in the balloon; in the third place, Maud was too near home to be in any danger whatever; in the fourth place, Carrol was here, and would inevitably find her out; and in the fifth place, the temptation of going with Grimes in an assumed character, and watching his conduct and demeanor under the circumstances, was irresistible.

She decided at once.

She was dressed, as has been said, for the drive which she had expected to take with Carrol. She dropped her veil, and rose in silence. Grimes took no further notice of her, but walked toward the door. She followed him outside. A brougham was drawn up in front of the house. Grimes opened the door for her. She got in and sat down. Grimes then followed and sat by her side; and she noticed that he placed his precious tin box, with tender and reverential care, on his knees; and leaned his arms upon it, as though he would preserve it from every conceivable danger. Thus they sat there, side by side, and the driver cracked his whip, and the horses started off, and soon they were rolling along the road.

Outside the village they met a gentleman and a lady walking back. It was dusk now, and their faces could not be seen. Neither Grimes nor Mrs. Lovell noticed them. But the gentleman and the lady stopped as the brougham drove by, and the gentleman said to the lady, "There goes that fellow that has appropriated the only carriage in the place."

And the lady answered cheerfully, "O, well, you know it really does n't matter. It will be such perfect delight to see Georgie, that I 'm sure I don't care whether I get home to-night or not at all."

And the brougham passed out of sight.

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IN A BROUGHAM.

THE brougham drove off with Mrs. Lovell and Grimes inside. Grimes sat in the attitude already described, leaning forward slightly, with the tin box on his knees, and his elbows on the tin box, rigid and silent. For some time nothing was said, and Mrs. Lovell waited patiently for her companion to begin the conversation. But her companion had no idea of doing anything of the kind. In the first place, he of course thought that Maud was with him. Now Maud had only been known to him as silent, sad, and reticent; never volunteering any remark, only answering in monosyllables when addressed, and incapable of carrying on a conversation. Thus she had appeared to him while travelling together recently. But again he had thoughts of his own which occupied his mind thoroughly. These thoughts occupied his mind now. They referred solely and exclusively to Mrs. Lovell, whose fate was a matter of never-ending anxiety to him. His mind was not now in this place. It was in Paris. It was inspecting all the city prisons, and conjecturing with deep anguish the place where Mrs. Lovell might be.

Mrs. Lovell waited and grew impatient. This silence was not what she wanted. From one point of view it was not disagreeable, since it showed what must have been the attitude of Grimes toward Maud. She saw that he must have been indifferent and inattentive, if his present demeanor afforded any clew to the past. At the same time it was disagreeable, for, as a matter of course, she was particularly anxious to converse with him. So, as he did not begin, she volunteered herself.

"It's really very pleasant this evening, is it not, Mr. Grimes?" said she, in a friendly way.

Now it may be supposed that Grimes would have at once detected her by her voice, but as a matter of fact Grimes did nothing of the kind. For as she though there certainly was a difference, yet it was not very glaring. Besides, Grimes was too much occupied with other things to be easily aroused.

"Yes," said he, shortly.

Mrs. Lovell waited for something more, but nothing more was forthcoming. She felt that the subject of the weather afforded not quite enough excitement to rouse her companion, and so she resorted to something else.

"Do you think that the driver knows his way, Mr. Grimes?" she asked, with apparent anxiety.

"O yes," said Grimes, in the same tone as before. After which he changed his position a little. "I'm afraid," he continued, "that I'm crowdin' you. I did intend to ride outside, but unfortunately there's only room for one, so I had to squeeze in here. Any way the ride won't be very long."

This was also flattering, since it gave an additional proof of the indifference of Grimes to Maud. At the same time, however, it was rather disappointing, since it showed a persistent determination to hold aloof from all friendly conversation. So again Mrs. Lovell relapsed into silence.

After a time she tried once more.

"I wonder," said she, mournfully, "what can have become of poor dear Georgie. Do you know, I feel awfully anxious about her, Mr. Grimes?"

This Mrs. Lovell said with an intention of maintaining the character of Maud. Upon Grimes this remark produced an effect which was the very opposite of what she had intended. Instead of rousing him to converse upon some congenial subject, it only served as a fresh reminder of his despair. He heaved a sigh so heavy that it ended in a groan; after which he relapsed into his former silence, and not a word escaped him.

Mrs. Lovell was certainly disappointed at the failure of this attempt, and began to feel a despair about her ability to arouse him. But she was

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so she tried once more.

"I wonder what in the world you 've got in that absurd box," said she. "You 've really brought it all the way from Paris you know, Mr. Grimes."

At this Grimes started. For there was in these words and in the tone of voice a decided flavor of Mrs. Lovell, and nothing at all of Maud. A wild thought flashed through his mind, but it was at once suppressed.

"What an infernal fool I must be," he thought, "but what a likeness there was to — to her. I 'm afraid I 'm gettin' delirium tremens. I 've taken altogether too much whiskey. I 've got to stop my grog, or it 'll go hard with me." These thoughts passed through his mind, but he made no reply. This was really rude in him, and so Mrs. Lovell thought, but this rudeness awakened no resentment whatever in her mind. She bore it with exemplary meekness, and patiently returned to the task of rousing him into saying something.

"You really are awfully reticent, you know, and it 's horrid; now is n't it, Mr. Grimes?" said she, quite forgetting the *rôle* of Maud which she had intended to maintain, and speaking more than ever in her own style and manner.

Grimes noticed the tone of voice again, and the style and manner of the words. How like they were to the well-known and fondly remembered idioms and expressions of Mrs. Lovell! Grimes thought of this, and heaved another of those sighs which were peculiar to him now, — a sigh deep, massive, long-drawn, and ending in a kind of groan.

"It 's somethin', miss," said he, in words that seemed wrung out of him, — "it 's somethin', miss, that is very precious. It 's my most precious treasure."

"O dear, Mr. Grimes, what a very, very funny way that is for one to be carrying money, you know! But do you really think it 's safe, and do you not feel just a little bit afraid of robbers, Mr. Grimes?"

This struck Grimes as being more like Mrs. Lovell than ever. He could not account for it. For the solemn and mournful Maud to rattle on in this style was to him unaccountable. And how had she acquired that marvellous resemblance to her sister in tone and in expression? He had never noticed any such resemblance before. There was also a certain flippancy in the remark and in the tone of voice which jarred upon him. He was still puzzled, but finally concluded in a vague way that Maud's joy in at last approaching her home was so excessive that it had quite changed her.

"I wonder why you did n't leave it at the inn," she continued, as she saw that he said nothing; "it would be really far safer there and far less troublesome, you know, Mr. Grimes, and you could get it again. I 'm sure, *I* can't imagine why one should carry all one's property with one wherever one goes, Mr. Grimes."

"It is n't money," said Grimes, "it 's something far more precious."

"Is it really? How very funny! Only fancy; why really, Mr. Grimes, do you know, you are speaking positively in riddles."

"There are things," said Grimes, solemnly, "in comparison with which jewels are gaudy toys and gold is sordid dust. And this is one of them."

"Well, I must say," remarked Mrs. Lovell, "*I* never heard any one express himself in such an awfully mysterious way. And so you brought it all the way from Paris. How very funny! Well, really, Mr. Grimes, I can only say that travelling in a balloon must be a very trivial thing, since you have been able to keep that with you all the time and produce it now; and really, you know, it 's so awfully absurd, when one comes to think of it, — now is n't it, Mr. Grimes?"

This was not Maud at all. Mrs. Lovell knew it, yet for the life of her she could not help speaking as she did. Grimes knew it too. He knew

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Maud Heathcote would never have uttered those words to him. That mixture of teasing absurdity and inconsequential badinage, with evident knowledge of the secret contents of the tin box, could not possibly be expressed by any person except one. Yet what possibility was there that this one should be here by his side calmly driving home? The thought was so bewildering that his brain reeled.

In an instant all his gloom and abstraction vanished. His heart beat fast. A wild idea, a wilder hope, filled mind and heart. Yet in the midst of this excitement one thought was prominent. He remembered his past mistakes. He was aware that they had arisen from a too credulous yielding to his own belief or fancy. He was now resolved to accept nothing from credulity, or hope, or fancy, or even belief; but to see with his own eyes the actual fact. Who was this person who was here with him? That was what he wanted to know.

He was intensely excited, yet he was resolved to undergo no more deceptions. He determined to see for himself. It was now quite dark, and, though he peered through the gloom, yet nothing satisfactory was revealed. He certainly saw the outline of a lady's figure, — but what lady? Was it Miss Heathcote, or was it — could it be, — might it be, — dare he hope, — was it possible?

He could endure his suspense no longer.

With trembling fingers he fumbled in his waistcoat-pocket! He found a match! — a thing he always carried there! He drew it forth! He struck it wildly against the side of the brougham!!!

The light flashed forth! He held up the blazing match, and with eager gaze looked at the face of his companion.

Astounded at this unexpected incident of the match, and confounded by this abrupt discovery, Mrs. Lovell, though not unwilling to be discovered, drop her veil, which had been raised since she had entered the brougham. But Grimes arrested her hand.

And there, illuminated by the blaze, close beside him, just before him, he saw unmistakably the face of Mrs. Lovell. Her eyes were downcast, there was a flush of confusion and timid embarrassment upon her face, yet that face was the face of the one being on earth who was worth far more to him than all the earth and all that it contained; yea, verily, and even more than life itself.

The sensation was tremendous. How came she here? It was unaccountable. It was miraculous. A thousand emotions of wonder rushed through him, but all at length found utterance in one exclamation.

"Wal! I 'll be darned!"

The burning match dropped from his hands, and he caught her in his arms. Mrs. Lovell uttered a little deprecatory shriek.

"I 've got you now at last," murmured old Grimes, in a dislocated sort of way, doddering, in fact maundering, and all that sort of thing, — "I 've got you now, and I ain't goin' to let you go. I don't know how 'n thunder you got here, and I don't want to. I only know it 's you, and that 's enough. Don't explain, I beg; let me only have the rapture of knowin' that this is really my darling and no other — "

"O dear! I 'm sure I don't know what in the world I am *ever* to do," sighed Mrs. Lovell.

* * * * *

On the return of Carrol and Maud to the inn, the latter had at once gone to find her sister. On seeing no signs of her she had become terribly alarmed; and Carrol was utterly bewildered. They had questioned everybody, and at last found out that the gentleman who had engaged the carriage had returned with it, and had gone off with some lady. Several of the people of the inn had seen the lady enter the carriage, and the gentleman go in after her. After this they had driven away.

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facts of the case suggested themselves, their stupefaction faded away, and there came in its place a calm, rational, and intelligent apprehension of the event, a sweet and exquisite appreciation of the situation. Whether it had been a blunder or a distinct understanding between the two, they could not tell. They preferred, however, to think that Grimes in the dusk had taken Mrs. Lovell for Maud, and that Mrs. Lovell had in the same way taken Grimes for Carrol. The idea of this possible blunder afforded delicious enjoyment to both; and they both lost themselves in conjectures as to the mode in which these two might finally discover the truth.

On the following day a carriage came from Heathcote Hall, and Maud and Carrol drove there. On their arrival they found Mrs. Lovell and Grimes, who had reached the place of their destination in safety. Maud's papa was there to welcome her, and to welcome them all in fact; for he turned out to be a fine, warm-hearted, and truly hospitable old boy, who doted on his daughters, and had been quite wild with anxiety about them when they ors and all the welcomes that he could offer them as the saviors and deliverers of his daughters from a cruel and terrible fate.

Frail human nature might exult in pausing here for the sake of gloating over the raptures of these lovers on their final reunion after such tremendous adventures; but duty forbids; and I, as a conscientious novelist, must hasten to a close.

I beg to remark then, that, as a matter of course, these lovers were all united in holy matrimony at the earliest possible time. The event took place on the 27th of November, 1870, as may be seen by referring to any old number of the local paper. It was a deeply interesting occasion.

The happy pairs then scattered. Two or three days after the event Mrs. Lovell wrote a rapturous letter to Maud.

"Dear Seth," she wrote, "is *all* that my *fondest fancy* wished, and *far more.* Do you know, Maudie darling, he has *not yet* spoken *one cruel word* to me, — *not one.*"

Maud's reply to this consisted of glittering generalities.

THE END.

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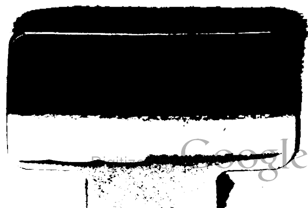

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A STRANGE MANUSCRIPT FOUND IN A COPPER CYLINDER

[James DeMille]

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A STRANGE MANUSCRIPT FOUND IN A COPPER CYLINDER

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

GILBERT GAUL

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE
1888

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Finding of the Copper Cylinder	1
II.	A Drift in the Antarctic Ocean	11
III.	A World of Fire and Desolation	21
IV.	The Sight of Human Beings	31
V.	The Torrent Sweeping under the Mountains	44
VI.	The New World	53
VII.	Scientific Theories and Scepticism	65
VIII.	The Cave-Dwellers	78
IX.	The Cavern of the Dead	86
X.	The Sacred Hunt	95
XI.	The Swamp Monster	102
XII.	The Baleful Sacrifice	111
XIII.	The Awful "Mista Kosek"	118
XIV.	I Learn my Doom	128
XV.	The Kohen is Inexorable	137
XVI.	The Kosekin	147
XVII.	Belief and Unbelief	156
XVIII.	A Voyage over the Pole	170
XIX.	The Wonders of the "Amir"	179
XX.	The Dark Maiden, Layelah	188
XXI.	The Flying Monster	198
XXII.	Escape	208
XXIII.	The Island of Fire	217
XXIV.	Recapture	226
XXV.	Falling, like Icarus, into the Sea	238

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER PAGE
XXVI. Grimm's Law Again 245
XXVII. Oxenden Preaches a Sermon 253
XXVIII. In Prison 259
XXIX. The Ceremony of Separation 268
XXX. The Day of Sacrifice 277
XXXI. Conclusion. 286

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

"THE DOCTOR WAS EVIDENTLY DISCOURSING UPON A FAVORITE TOPIC" . . . . *Frontispiece.*

"WITH THIS HE ATTACKED THE COPPER CYLINDER, AND BY MEANS OF A FEW DEXTEROUS BLOWS SUCCEEDED IN CUTTING IT OPEN" . . . . *To face p.* 8

"I BEGAN TO READ THIS, BUT THERE CAME A LUMP IN MY THROAT, AND I HAD TO STOP" . . . . . " 24

"THE NATIVES NOW ALL CROWDED AROUND US, MAKING MANY STRANGE GESTURES" . . . . " 34

"I RAISED MY RIFLE AND TOOK AIM. THEN IN QUICK SUCCESSION TWO REPORTS THUNDERED OUT WITH TREMENDOUS UPROAR" . . . . " 50

"ANOTHER TOOK A SPONGE AND PROCEEDED TO WASH MY FACE AND HANDS" . . . . " 62

"HER FACE AND FORM, BUT ESPECIALLY HER EYES, SHOWED HER TO BE OF QUITE A DIFFERENT RACE FROM THESE OTHERS" . . . . " 70

"SHE TOOK OFF THE OLD WREATH AND PUT ON A FRESH ONE" . . . . " 94

"THEN THE KOHEN RAISED HIS KNIFE AND PLUNGED IT INTO THE HEART OF THE YOUTH" . . . . . " 114

"FOR A MOMENT I STOOD MOTIONLESS, STARING; THEN ALL THE CAVERN SEEMED TO SWIM AROUND ME" . " 124

"WE HAD MANY THINGS TO SAY TO ONE ANOTHER" . " 132

"THERE WERE ALL THE ROWERS, EACH ONE UPON HIS SEAT, AND FROM THEM ALL THERE CAME FORTH A CHANT WHICH WAS FULL OF TRIUMPH" . . . . " 176

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"'THIS,' SAID LAYELAH, 'IS THE WAY WE HAVE OF ESCAPING.'" . . . . *To face p.* 202

"WITH ONE HAND I CLUNG TO THE STIFF MANE OF THE MONSTER; WITH THE OTHER I HELD ALMAH" " 214

"ALMAH LAY DOWN UPON THE SAND, AND I SEATED MYSELF, LEANING AGAINST A ROCK, A LITTLE DISTANCE OFF" . . . . " 218

"THE NEXT INSTANT WE WERE ALL IN THE WATER TOGETHER" . . . . " 236

"THE ATOLLS," OR CORAL ISLANDS . . . . " 254

"THE WOMEN—THE HAGS OF HORROR—THE SHRIEK-LIKE ONES, AS I MAY CALL THEM, WERE ALL AROUND US" . . . . " 272

"I AM ATAM-OR, THE MAN OF LIGHT" . . . . " 284

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A STRANGE MANUSCRIPT FOUND IN A COPPER CYLINDER.

CHAPTER I.

THE FINDING OF THE COPPER CYLINDER.

It occurred as far back as February 15, 1850. It happened on that day that the yacht *Falcon* lay becalmed upon the ocean between the Canaries and the Madeira Islands. This yacht *Falcon* was the property of Lord Featherstone, who, being weary of life in England, had taken a few congenial friends for a winter's cruise in these southern latitudes. They had visited the Azores, the Canaries, and the Madeira Islands, and were now on their way to the Mediterranean.

The wind had failed, a deep calm had succeeded, and everywhere, as far as the eye could reach, the water was smooth and glassy. The yacht rose and fell at the impulse of the long ocean undulations, and the creaking of the spars sounded out a lazy accompaniment to the motion of the vessel. All around was a watery horizon, except in one place only, towards the south, where far in the distance the Peak of Teneriffe rose into the air.

The profound calm, the warm atmosphere, the slow pitching of the yacht, and the dull creaking of the spars all combined to lull into a state of indolent repose the people on board. Forward were the crew; some

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asleep, others smoking, others playing cards. At the stern were Oxenden, the intimate friend of Featherstone, and Dr. Congreve, who had come in the double capacity of friend and medical attendant. These two, like the crew, were in a state of dull and languid repose. Suspended between the two masts, in an Indian hammock, lay Featherstone, with a cigar in his mouth and a novel in his hand, which he was pretending to read. The fourth member of the party, Melick, was seated near the mainmast, folding some papers in a peculiar way. His occupation at length attracted the roving eyes of Featherstone, who poked forth his head from his hammock, and said, in a sleepy voice:

"I say, Melick, you're the most energetic fellah I ever saw. By Jove! you're the only one aboard that's busy. What are you doing?"

"Paper boats," said Melick, in a business-like tone.

"Paper boats! By Jove!" said Featherstone. "What for?"

"I'm going to have a regatta," said Melick. "Anything to kill time, you know."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Featherstone again, raising himself higher in his hammock, "that's not a bad idea. A wegatta! By Jove! glowious! glowious! I say, Oxenden, did you hear that?"

"What do you mean by a regatta?" asked Oxenden, lazily.

"Oh, I mean a race with these paper boats. We can bet on them, you know."

At this Featherstone sat upright, with his legs dangling out of the hammock.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed again. "Betting! So we can. Do you know, Melick, old chap, I think that's a wegular piece of inspiration. A wegatta! and we can bet on the best boat."

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"But there isn't any wind," said Oxenden.

"Well, you know, that's the fun of it," said Melick, who went solemnly on as he spoke, folding his paper boats; "that's the fun of it. For you see if there was a wind we should be going on ourselves, and the regatta couldn't come off; but, as it is, the water is just right. You pick out your boat, and lay your bet on her to race to some given point."

"A given point? But how can we find any?"

"Oh, easily enough; something or anything—a bubble 'll do, or we can pitch out a bit of wood."

Upon this Featherstone descended from his perch, and came near to examine the proceedings, while the other two, eager to take advantage of the new excitement, soon joined him. By this time Melick had finished his paper boats. There were four of them, and they were made of different colors, namely, red, green, yellow, and white.

"I'll put these in the water," said Melick, "and then we can lay our bets on them as we choose. But first let us see if there is anything that can be taken as a point of arrival. If there isn't anything, I can pitch out a bit of wood in any direction which may seem best."

Saying this, he went to the side, followed by the others, and all looked out carefully over the water.

"There's a black speck out there," said Oxenden.

"So there is," said Featherstone. "That'll do. I wonder what it is?"

"Oh, a bit of timber," said Melick. "Probably the spar of some ship."

"It don't look like a spar," said the doctor; "it's only a round spot, like the float of some net."

"Oh, it's a spar," said Melick. "It's one end of it, the rest is under water."

The spot thus chosen was a dark, circular object,

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about a hundred yards away, and certainly did look very much like the extremity of some spar, the rest of which was under water. Whatever it was, however, it served well enough for their present purpose, and no one took any further interest in it, except as the point towards which the paper boats should run in their eventful race.

Melick now let himself down over the side, and placed the paper boats on the water as carefully as possible. After this the four stood watching the little fleet in silence. The water was perfectly still, and there was no perceptible wind, but there were draughts of air caused by the rise and fall of the yacht, and these affected the tiny boats. Gradually they drew apart, the green one drifting astern, the yellow one remaining under the vessel, while the red and the white were carried out in the direction where they were expected to go, with about a foot of space between them.

"Two to one on the red!" cried Featherstone, betting on the one which had gained the lead.

"Done," said Melick, promptly taking his offer.

Oxenden made the same bet, which was taken by Melick and the doctor.

Other bets were now made as to the direction which they would take, as to the distance by which the red would beat the white, as to the time which would be occupied by the race, and as to fifty other things which need not be mentioned. All took part in this; the excitement rose high and the betting went on merrily. At length it was noticed that the white was overhauling the red. The excitement grew intense; the betting changed its form, but was still kept up, until at last the two paper boats seemed blended together in one dim spot which gradually faded out of sight.

It was now necessary to determine the state of the race,

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so Featherstone ordered out the boat. The four were soon embarked, and the men rowed out towards the point which had been chosen as the end of the race. On coming near they found the paper boats stuck together, saturated with water, and floating limp on the surface. An animated discussion arose about this. Some of the bets were off, but others remained an open question, and each side insisted upon a different view of the case. In the midst of this Featherstone's attention was drawn to the dark spot already mentioned as the goal of the race.

"That's a queer-looking thing," said he, suddenly. "Pull up, lads, a little; let's see what it is. It doesn't look to me like a spar."

The others, always on the lookout for some new object of interest, were attracted by these words, and looked closely at the thing in question. The men pulled. The boat drew nearer.

"It's some sort of floating vessel," said Oxenden.

"It's not a spar," said Melick, who was at the bow.

And as he said this he reached out and grasped at it. He failed to get it, and did no more than touch it. It moved easily and sank, but soon came up again. A second time he grasped at it, and with both hands. This time he caught it, and then lifted it out of the water into the boat. These proceedings had been watched with the deepest interest; and now, as this curious floating thing made its appearance among them, they all crowded around it in eager excitement.

"It looks like a can of preserved meat," said the doctor.

"It certainly is a can," said Melick, "for it's made of metal; but as to preserved meat, I have my doubts."

The article in question was made of metal, and was cylindrical in shape. It was soldered tight, and evidently contained something. It was about eighteen

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inches long and eight wide. The nature of the metal was not easily perceptible, for it was coated with slime, and covered over about half its surface with barnacles and sea-weed. It was not heavy, and would have floated higher out of the water had it not been for these encumbrances.

"It's some kind of preserved meat," said the doctor. "Perhaps something good — game, I dare say — yes, Yorkshire game-pie. They pot all sorts of things now."

"If it's game," said Oxenden, "it'll be rather high by this time. Man alive! look at those weeds and shells. It must have been floating for ages."

"It's my belief," said Featherstone, "that it's part of the provisions laid in by Noah for his long voyage in the ark. So come, let's open it, and see what sort of diet the antediluvians had."

"It may be liquor," said Oxenden.

Melick shook his head.

"No," said he; "there's something inside, but whatever it is, it isn't liquor. It's odd, too. The thing is of foreign make, evidently. I never saw anything like it before. It may be Chinese."

"By Jove!" cried Featherstone, "this is getting exciting. Let's go back to the yacht and open it."

The men rowed back to the yacht.

"It's meat of some sort," continued the doctor. "I'm certain of that. It has come in good time. We can have it for dinner."

"You may have my share, then," said Oxenden. "I hereby give and bequeath to you all my right, title, and interest in and to anything in the shape of meat that may be inside."

"Meat cans," said Melick, "are never so large as that."

"Oh, I don't know about that," said the doctor.

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"They make up pretty large packages of pemmican for the arctic expeditions."

"But they never pack up pemmican in copper cylinders," said Melick, who had been using his knife to scrape off the crust from the vessel.

"Copper!" exclaimed Oxenden. "Is it copper?"

"Look for yourselves," said Melick, quietly.

They all looked, and could see, where the knife had cut into the vessel, that it was as he said. It was copper.

"It's foreign work," said Melick. "In England we make tin cans for everything. It may be something that's drifted out from Mogadore or some port in Morocco."

"In that case," said Oxenden, "it may contain the mangled remains of one of the wives of some Moorish pasha."

By this time they had reached the yacht and hurried aboard. All were eager to satisfy their curiosity. Search was made for a cold-chisel, but to no purpose. Then Featherstone produced a knife which was used to open sardine boxes; but after a faithful trial this proved useless. At length Melick, who had gone off in search of something more effective, made his appearance, armed with an axe. With this he attacked the copper cylinder, and by means of a few dexterous blows succeeded in cutting it open. Then he looked in.

"What do you see?" asked Featherstone.

"Something," said Melick, "but I can't quite make it out."

"If you can't make it out, then shake it out," said Oxenden.

Upon this Melick took the cylinder, turned it upside down, shook it smartly, and then lifted it and pounded it against the deck. This served to loosen

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the contents, which seemed tightly packed, but came gradually down until at length they could be seen and drawn forth. Melick drew them forth, and the contents of the mysterious copper cylinder resolved themselves into two packages.

The sight of these packages only served to intensify their curiosity. If it had been some species of food it would at once have revealed itself, but these packages suggested something more important. What could they be? Were there treasures inside—jewels, or golden ornaments from some Moorish seraglio, or strange coin from far Cathay?

One of the packages was very much larger than the other. It was enclosed in wrappers made of some coarse kind of felt, bound tight with strong cords. The other was much smaller, and was folded in the same material without being bound. This Melick seized and began to open.

"Wait a minute," said Featherstone. "Let's make a bet on it. Five guineas that it's some sort of jewels!"

"Done," said Oxenden.

Melick opened the package, and it was seen that Featherstone had lost. There were no jewels, but one or two sheets of something that looked like paper. It was not paper, however, but some vegetable product which was used for the same purpose. The surface was smooth, but the color was dingy, and the lines of the vegetable fibres were plainly discernible. These sheets were covered with writing.

"Halloa!" cried Melick. "Why, this is English!"

At this the others crowded around to look on, and Featherstone in his excitement forgot that he had lost his bet. There were three sheets, all covered with writing — one in English, another in French, and a

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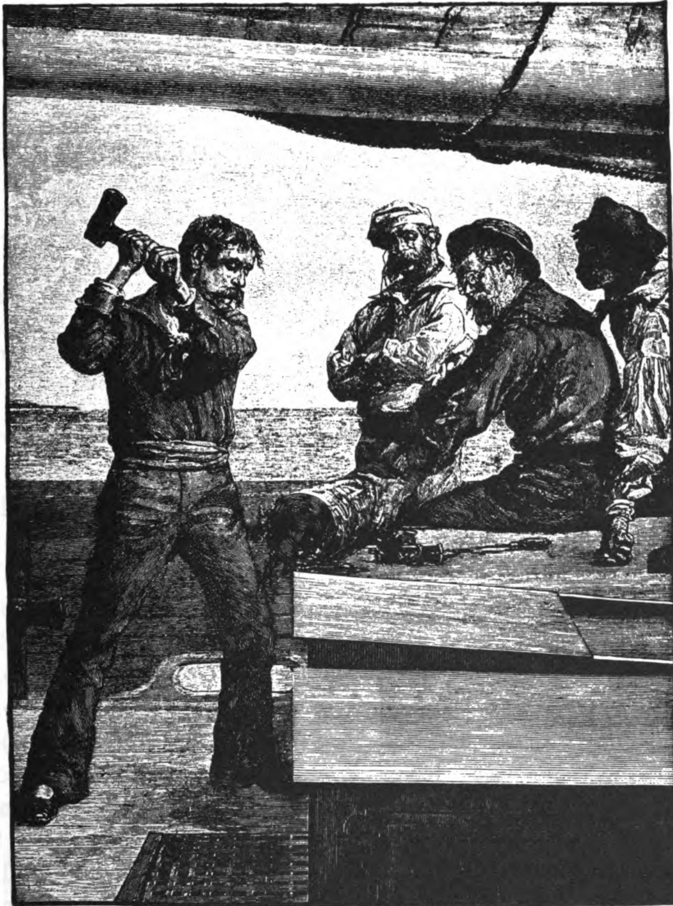

"WITH THIS HE ATTACKED THE COPPER CYLINDER, AND BY MEANS OF A FEW DEXTEROUS BLOWS SUCCEEDED IN CUTTING IT OPEN."

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third in German. It was the same message, written in these three different languages. But at that moment they scarcely noticed this. All that they saw was the message itself, with its mysterious meaning.

It was as follows:

"To the finder of this:

"SIR,—I am an Englishman, and have been carried by a series of incredible events to a land from which escape is as impossible as from the grave. I have written this and committed it to the sea, in the hope that the ocean currents may bear it within the reach of civilized man. Oh, unknown friend! whoever you are, I entreat you to let this message be made known in some way to my father, Henry More, Keswick, Cumberland, England, so that he may learn the fate of his son. The MS. accompanying this contains an account of my adventures, which I should like to have forwarded to him. Do this for the sake of that mercy which you may one day wish to have shown to yourself.

"ADAM MORE."

"By Jove!" cried Featherstone, as he read the above, "this is really getting to be something tremendous."

"This other package must be the manuscript," said Oxenden, "and it'll tell all about it."

"Such a manuscript 'll be better than meat," said the doctor, sententiously.

Melick said nothing, but, opening his knife, he cut the cords and unfolded the wrapper. He saw a great collection of leaves, just like those of the letter, of some vegetable substance, smooth as paper, and covered with writing.

"It looks like Egyptian papyrus," said the doctor. 'That was the common paper of antiquity."

"Never mind the Egyptian papyrus," said Featherstone, in feverish curiosity. "Let's have the contents of the manuscript. You, Melick, read; you're the most energetic of the lot, and when you're tired the rest of us will take turns."

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"Read? Why, it'll take a month to read all this," said Melick.

"All the better," said Featherstone; "this calm will probably last a month, and we shall have nothing to interest us."

Melick made no further objection. He was as excited as the rest, and so he began the reading of the manuscript.

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CHAPTER II.

ADRIFT IN THE ANTARCTIC OCEAN.

MY name is Adam More. I am the son of Henry More, apothecary, Keswick, Cumberland. I was mate of the ship *Trevelyan* (Bennet, master), which was chartered by the British Government to convey convicts to Van Dieman's Land. This was in 1843. We made our voyage without any casualty, landed our convicts in Hobart Town, and then set forth on our return home. It was the 17th of December when we left. From the first adverse winds prevailed, and in order to make any progress we were obliged to keep well to the south. At length, on the 6th of January, we sighted Desolation Island. We found it, indeed, a desolate spot. In its vicinity we saw a multitude of smaller islands, perhaps a thousand in number, which made navigation difficult, and forced us to hurry away as fast as possible. But the aspect of this dreary spot was of itself enough to repel us. There were no trees, and the multitude of islands seemed like moss-covered rocks; while the temperature, though in the middle of the antarctic summer, was from 38° to 58° Fahr.

In order to get rid of these dangerous islands we stood south and west, and at length found ourselves in south latitude 65°, longitude 60° east. We were fortunate enough not to find any ice, although we were within fifteen hundred miles of the South Pole, and far within that impenetrable icy barrier which,

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in 1773, had arrested the progress of Captain Cook. Here the wind failed us, and we lay becalmed and drifting. The sea was open all around us, except to the southeast, where there was a low line along the horizon terminating in a lofty promontory; but though it looked like land we took it for ice. All around us whales and grampuses were gambolling and spouting in vast numbers. The weather was remarkably fine and clear.

For two or three days the calm continued, and we drifted along helplessly, until at length we found ourselves within a few miles of the promontory above mentioned. It looked like land, and seemed to be a rocky island rising from the depths of the sea. It was, however, all covered with ice and snow, and from this there extended eastward as far as the eye could reach an interminable line of ice, but towards the southwest the sea seemed open to navigation. The promontory was very singular in shape, rising up to a peak which was at least a thousand feet in height, and forming a striking object, easily discovered and readily identified by any future explorer. We named it, after our ship, Trevelyan Peak, and then felt anxious to lose sight of it forever. But the calm continued, and at length we drifted in close enough to see immense flocks of seals dotting the ice at the foot of the peak.

Upon this I proposed to Agnew, the second mate, that we should go ashore, shoot some seals, and bring them back. This was partly for the excitement of the hunt, and partly for the honor of landing in a place never before trodden by the foot of man. Captain Bennet made some objections; but he was old and cautious, and we were young and venturesome, so we laughed away his scruples and set forth. We did not take any of the crew, owing to the captain's objections.

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He said that if we chose to throw away our own lives he could not help it, but that he would positively refuse to allow a single man to go with us. We thought this refusal an excess of caution amounting to positive cowardice, but were unable to change his mind. The distance was not great, the adventure was attractive, and so the captain's gig was lowered, and in this Agnew and I rowed ashore. We took with us a double-barrelled rifle apiece, and also a pistol. Agnew took a glass.

We rowed for about three miles, and reached the edge of the ice, which extended far out from the promontory. Here we landed, and secured the boat by means of a small grappling-iron, which we thrust into the ice. We then walked towards the promontory for about a mile, and here we found a multitude of seals. These animals were so fearless that they made not the slightest movement as we came up, but stared at us in an indifferent way. We killed two or three, and then debated whether to go to the promontory or not. Agnew was eager to go, so as to touch the actual rock; but I was satisfied with what we had done, and was now desirous of returning. In the midst of this I felt a flake of snow on my cheek. I started and looked up. To my great surprise I saw that the sky had changed since I had last noticed it. When we left the ship it was clear and blue, but now it was overspread with dark, leaden-colored clouds, and the snow-flakes that had fallen were ominous of evil. A snow-storm here, in the vicinity of the ice, was too serious a thing to be disregarded. But one course now remained, and that was an immediate return to the ship.

Each of us seized a seal and dragged it after us to the boat. We reached it and flung them in. Just at that moment a gun sounded over the water. It was from

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the ship—the signal of alarm—the summons from the captain for our return. We saw now that she had been drifting since we left her, and had moved southwest several miles. The row back promised to be far harder than the pull ashore, and, what was worse, the wind was coming up, the sea was rising, and the snow was thickening. Neither of us said a word. We saw that our situation was very serious, and that we had been very foolhardy; but words were useless now. The only thing to be done was to pull for the ship with all our strength, and that was what we did.

So we pushed off, and rowed as we had never rowed before. Our progress was difficult. The sea grew steadily rougher; the wind increased; the snow thickened; and, worst of all, the day was drawing to a close. We had miscalculated both as to distance and time. Even if it had continued calm we should have had to row back in the dark; but now the sun was setting, and with the darkness we had to encounter the gathering storm and the blinding snow. We rowed in silence. At every stroke our situation grew more serious. The wind was from the south, and therefore favored us to some extent, and also made less of a sea than would have been produced by a wind from any other quarter; but then this south wind brought dangers of its own, which we were soon to feel—new dangers and worse ones. For this south wind drove the ship farther from us, and at the same time broke up the vast fields of ice and impelled the fractured masses northward. But this was a danger which we did not know just then. At that time we were rowing for the ship, and amid the darkness and the blinding snow and the dashing waves we heard from time to time the report of signal-guns fired from the ship to guide us back. These were our

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only guide, for the darkness and the snow had drawn the ship from our sight, and we had to be guided by our hearing only.

We were rowing for our lives, and we knew it; but every moment our situation grew more desperate. Each new report of the gun seemed to sound farther away. We seemed always to be rowing in the wrong direction. At each report we had to shift the boat's course somewhat, and pull towards the last point from which the gun seemed to sound. With all this the wind was increasing rapidly to a gale, the sea was rising and breaking over the boat, the snow was blinding us with its ever-thickening sleet. The darkness deepened, and at length had grown so intense that nothing whatever could be seen—neither sea nor sky, not even the boat itself—yet we dared not stop; we had to row. Our lives depended on our efforts. We had to row, guided by the sound of the ship's gun, which the ever-varying wind incessantly changed, till our minds grew all confused, and we rowed blindly and mechanically.

So we labored for hours at the oars, and the storm continually increased, and the sea continually rose, while the snow fell thicker and the darkness grew intenser. The reports of the gun now grew fainter; what was worse, they were heard at longer intervals, and this showed us that Captain Bennet was losing heart; that he was giving us up; that he despaired of finding us, and was now firing only an occasional gun out of a mournful sense of duty. This thought reduced us to despair. It seemed as if all our efforts had only served to take us farther away from the ship, and deprived us of all motive for rowing any harder than was barely necessary to keep the boat steady. After a time Agnew dropped his oar and began to bail out the boat—a work which was needed; for, in spite of our care, she

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had shipped many seas, and was one third full of water. He worked away at this while I managed the boat, and then we took turns at bailing. In this way we passed the dreary night.

Morning came at last. The wind was not so violent, but the snow was so thick that we could only see for a little distance around us. The ship was nowhere visible, nor were there any signs of her. The last gun had been fired during the night. All that we could see was the dim outline of a gaunt iceberg—an ominous spectacle. Not knowing what else to do we rowed on as before, keeping in what seemed our best course, though this was mere conjecture, and we knew all the time that we might be going wrong. There was no compass in the boat, nor could we tell the sun's position through the thick snow. We rowed with the wind, thinking that it was blowing towards the north, and would carry us in that direction. We still hoped to come within sound of the ship's gun, and kept straining our ears incessantly to hear the wished-for report. But no such sound ever came again, and we heard nothing except the plash of the waves and the crash of breaking ice. Thus all that day we rowed along, resting at intervals when exhausted, and then resuming our labors, until at length night came; and again to the snow and ice and waves was added the horror of great darkness. We passed that night in deep misery. We had eaten nothing since we left the ship, but though exhausted by long fasting and severe labor, the despair of our hearts took away all desire for food. We were worn out with hard work, yet the cold was too great to allow us to take rest, and we were compelled to row so as to keep ourselves from perishing. But fatigue and drowsiness overcame us, and we often sank into sleep even while rowing; and then after a brief

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slumber we would awake with benumbed limbs to wrestle again with the oars. In this way we passed that night.

Another morning came, and we found to our great joy that the snow had ceased. We looked eagerly around to see if there were any signs of the ship. Nothing could be seen of her. Far away on one side rose a peak, which looked like the place where we had landed. Judging from the wind, which we still supposed to be southerly, the peak lay towards the northeast; in which case we had been carried steadily, in spite of all our efforts, towards the south. About a mile on one side of us the ice began, and extended far away; while on the other side, at the distance of some ten miles, there was another line of ice. We seemed to have been carried in a southwesterly direction along a broad strait that ran into the vast ice-fields. This discovery showed how utterly useless our labors had been; for in spite of all, even with the wind in our favor, we had been drawn steadily in an opposite direction. It was evident that there was some current here, stronger than all our strength, which had brought us to this place.

We now determined to land on the ice, and try to cook a portion of our seals. On approaching it we noticed that there was a current which tended to draw us past the ice in what I supposed to be a southwesterly direction. This confirmed my worst fears. But now the labor of landing and building a fire on the ice served to interest us for a time and divert our thoughts. We brushed away the snow, and then broke up a box which was in the boat, and also the stern seats. This we used very sparingly, reserving the rest for another occasion. Then we cut portions from one of the seals, and laid them in thin strips on the flames. The cooking was but slight, for the meat was merely singed;

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but we were ravenous, and the contact of the fire was enough to give it an attractive flavor. With this food we were greatly refreshed; and as for drink, we had all around us an endless extent of ice and snow. Then, taking our precious fragments of cooked meat, we returned to the boat and put off. We could scarcely tell what to do next, and while debating on this point we fell asleep. We slept far into the night, then awoke benumbed with cold; then took to the oars till we were weary; then fell asleep again, to be again awakened by the cold and again to pull at the oars. So the night passed, and another day came.

The snow still held off, but the sky was overcast with dark, leaden-colored clouds, and looked threatening. Ice was all around us as before; and the open water had diminished now from ten miles to five miles of width. The ice on one side was low, but on the opposite side it arose to the height of one hundred feet. We saw here, as we watched the shore, that the current which had already borne us thus far was now stronger than ever, and was carrying us along at a rate which made all efforts of ours against it utterly useless. And now a debate arose between us as to the direction of this current. Agnew suddenly declared his belief that it was running north, while I was firm in the conviction that it ran south.

"There's no use rowing any more," said Agnew. "If it runs south we can't resist it. It's too strong. But I always like to look on the bright side, and so I believe it runs north. In that case there is no use rowing, for it will carry us along fast enough."

Then I proposed that we should go ashore on the ice. To this Agnew objected, but afterwards consented, at my earnest request. So we tried to get ashore, but this time found it impossible; for the ice

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consisted of a vast sheet of floating lumps, which looked like the ruin of bergs that had been broken up in some storm. After this I had nothing to say, nor was there anything left for us but to drift wherever the current might carry us.

So we drifted for some days, Agnew all the time maintaining that we were going north, while I was sure that we were going south. The sky remained as cloudy as ever, the wind varied incessantly, and there was nothing by which we could conjecture the points of the compass. We lived on our seal, and for drink we chewed ice and snow. One thing was certain — the climate was no colder. Agnew laid great stress on this.

"You see," said he, "we must be going north. If we were going south we should be frozen stiff by this time."

"Yes; but if we were going north," said I, "we ought to find it growing warmer."

"No," said he, "not with all this ice around us. It's the ice that keeps the temperature in this cold state."

Argument could do no good, and so we each remained true to our belief — his leading him to hope, and mine dragging me down to despair. At length we finished the last fragment of the seal that we had cooked, and, finding ourselves near some firm ice, we went ashore and cooked all that was left, using the remainder of our wood for fuel, and all that we dared to remove from the boat. Re-embarking with this, we drifted on as before.

Several more days passed. At last one night I was roused by Agnew. He pointed far away to the distant horizon, where I saw a deep red glow as of fire. We were both filled with wonder at the sight, and were utterly unable to account for it. We knew that

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it could not be caused by the sun or the moon, for it was midnight, and the cause lay on the earth and not in the skies. It was a deep, lurid glow, extending along the horizon, and seemed to be caused by some vast conflagration.

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CHAPTER III.

A WORLD OF FIRE AND DESOLATION.

At the sight of that deep-red glow various feelings arose within us: in me there was new dejection; in Agnew there was stronger hope. I could not think but that it was our ship that was on fire, and was burning before our eyes. Agnew thought that it was some burning forest, and that it showed our approach to some habitable and inhabited land. For hour after hour we watched, and all the time the current drew us nearer, and the glow grew brighter and more intense. At last we were too weak to watch any longer, and we fell asleep.

On waking our first thoughts were about the fire, and we looked eagerly around. It was day, but the sky was as gloomy as ever, and the fire was there before our eyes, bright and terrible. We could now see it plainly, and discern the cause also. The fire came from two points, at some distance apart—two peaks rising above the horizon, from which there burst forth flames and smoke with incessant explosions. All was now manifest. It was no burning ship, no blazing forest, no land inhabited by man: those blazing peaks were two volcanoes in a state of active eruption, and at that sight I knew the worst.

"I know where we are now," I said, despairingly.

"Where?" asked Agnew.

"That," said I, "is the antarctic continent.

"The antarctic fiddlestick," said he, contemptuously. "It is far more likely to be some volcanic island in

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the South Sea. There's a tremendous volcano in the Sandwich Islands, and these are something like it."

"I believe," said I, "that these are the very volcanoes that Sir James Ross discovered last year."

"Do you happen to know where he found them?" Agnew asked.

"I do not," I answered.

"Well, I do," said he, "and they're thousands of miles away from this. They are south latitude 77°, east longitude 167°; while we, as I guess, are about south latitude 40°, east longitude 60°."

"At any rate," said I, "we're drifting straight towards them."

"So I see," said Agnew, dryly. "At any rate, the current will take us somewhere. We shall find ourselves carried past these volcanic islands, or through them, and then west to the Cape of Good Hope. Besides, even here we may find land with animals and vegetation; who knows?"

"What! amid all this ice?" I cried. "Are you mad?"

"Mad?" said he; "I should certainly go mad if I hadn't hope."

"Hope!" I repeated; "I have long since given up hope."

"Oh, well," said he, "enjoy your despair, and don't try to deprive me of my consolation. My hope sustains me, and helps me to cheer you up. It would never do, old fellow, for both of us to knock under."

I said nothing more, nor did Agnew. We drifted on, and all our thoughts were taken up with the two volcanoes, towards which we were every moment drawing nearer. As we approached they grew larger and larger, towering up to a tremendous height. I had seen Vesuvius and Stromboli and Ætna and Cotopaxi; but these

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appeared far larger than any of them, not excepting the last. They rose, like the Peak of Teneriffe, abruptly from the sea, with no intervening hills to dwarf or diminish their proportions. They were ten or twelve miles apart, and the channel of water in which we were drifting flowed between them.

Here the ice and snow ended. We thus came at last to land; but it was a land that seemed more terrible than even the bleak expanse of ice and snow that lay behind, for nothing could be seen except a vast and drear accumulation of lava blocks of every imaginable shape, without a trace of vegetation—uninhabited, uninhabitable, and unpassable to man. But just where the ice ended and the rocks began there was a long, low reef, which projected for more than a quarter of a mile into the water, affording the only possible landing-place within sight. Here we decided to land, so as to rest and consider what was best to be done.

Here we landed, and walked up to where rugged lava blocks prevented any further progress. But at this spot our attention was suddenly arrested by a sight of horror. It was a human figure lying prostrate, face downward.

At this sight there came over us a terrible sensation. Even Agnew's buoyant soul shrank back, and we stared at each other with quivering lips. It was some time before we could recover ourselves; then we went to the figure, and stooped down to examine it.

The clothes were those of a European and a sailor; the frame was emaciated and dried up, till it looked like a skeleton; the face was blackened and all withered, and the bony hands were clinched tight. It was evidently some sailor who had suffered shipwreck in these frightful solitudes, and had drifted here to starve to death in this appalling wilderness. It was a sight

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which seemed ominous of our own fate, and Agnew's boasted hope, which had so long upheld him, now sank down into a despair as deep as my own. What room was there now for hope, or how could we expect any other fate than this?

At length I began to search the pockets of the deceased.

"What are you doing?" asked Agnew, in a hoarse voice.

"I'm trying to find out who he is," I said. "Perhaps there may be papers."

As I said this I felt something in the breast-pocket of his jacket, and drew it forth. It was a leather pocket-book, mouldy and rotten like the clothing. On opening it, it fell to pieces. There was nothing in it but a piece of paper, also mouldy and rotten. This I unfolded with great care, and saw writing there, which, though faded, was still legible. It was a letter, and there were still signs of long and frequent perusals, and marks, too, which looked as though made by tears—tears, perhaps of the writer, perhaps of the reader: who can tell? I have preserved this letter ever since, and I now fasten it here upon this sheet of my manuscript.

THE LETTER.

"Bristol April 20. 1820.

"my darling tom

"i writ you these few lines in hast i don like youar gon a walen an in the south sea dont go darlin tom or mebbe ill never se you agin for ave bad drems of you darlin tom an im afraid so don go my darlin tom but come back an take anoth ship for America baby is as wel as ever but mises is pa an as got a new tooth an i think you otnt go a walen o darlin tom * * * sea as the wages was i in New York an better go thar an id like to go ther for good for they gives good wages in America. O come back my Darlin tom and take me to America an the baby an weel all live an love an di together Your loving wife

"Polley Reed."

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"I BEGAN TO READ THIS, BUT THERE CAME A LUMP IN MY THROAT, AND I HAD TO STOP."

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I began to read this, but there came a lump in my throat, and I had to stop. Agnew leaned on my shoulder, and we both read it in silence. He rubbed the back of his hand over his eyes and drew a long breath. Then he walked away for a little distance, and I put the letter carefully away in my own pocket-book. After a little while Agnew came back.

"More," said he, "do you remember any of the burial-service?"

I understood his meaning at once.

"Yes," I said, "some of it—a good deal of it, I think."

"That's good," said he. "Let's put the poor fellow under ground."

"It would be hard to do that," I said; "we'll have to bury him in the snow."

At this Agnew went off for a little distance and clambered over the rocks. He was not gone long. When he returned he said, "I've found some crumbled pumice-stone; we can scoop a grave for him there."

We then raised the body and carried it to the place which Agnew had found. So emaciated was the poor dead sailor that his remains were no heavier than a small boy. On reaching the spot, we found the crumbled pumice-stone. We placed the body in a crevice among the lava rocks, and then I said what I could remember of the burial-service. After this we carried in our hands the crumbled pumice-stone until we had covered the body, and thus gave the poor fellow a Christian burial.

We then returned to the shore.

"More, old fellow," said Agnew, "I feel the better for this; the service has done me good."

"And me too," said I. "It has reminded me of what I had forgotten. This world is only a part of life. We

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may lose it and yet live on. There is another world; and if we can only keep that in our minds we sha'n't be so ready to sink into despair—that is, I sha'n't. Despair is my weakness; you are more hopeful."

"Yes," said Agnew, solemnly; "but my hope thus far has referred only to the safety of my skin. After this I shall try to think of my soul, and cultivate, not the hope of escape, but the hope full of immortality. Yes, More, after all we shall live, if not in England, then, let us hope, in heaven."

There was a long silence after this—that kind of silence which one may preserve who is at the point of death.

"I wonder how he got here?" said Agnew, at last. "The letter mentions a whaler. No doubt the ship has been driven too far south; it has foundered; he has escaped in a boat, either alone or with others; he has been carried along this channel, and has landed here, afraid to go any farther."

"But his boat, what has become of that?"

"His boat! That must have gone long ago. The letter was written in 1820. At any rate, let's look around."

We did so. After some search we found the fragments of a rotted rope attached to a piece of rock.

"That," said Agnew, "must have been fastened to the boat; and as for the boat herself, she has long ago been swept away from this."

"What shall we do now?" I said, after a long silence.

"There's only one thing," said Agnew. "We must go on."

"Go on?" I asked, in wonder.

"Certainly," said he, confidently. "Will you stay here? No. Will you go back? You can't. We must, therefore, go on. That is our only hope."

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"Hope!" I cried. "Do you still talk of hope?"

"Hope?" said Agnew; "of course. Why not? There are no limits to hope, are there? One can hope anything anywhere. It is better to die while struggling like a man, full of hope and energy, than to perish in inaction and despair. It is better to die in the storm and furious waters than to waste away in this awful place. So come along. Let's drift as before. Let's see where this channel will take us. It will certainly take us somewhere. Such a stream as this must have some outlet."

"This stream," said I, "will take us to death, and death only. The current grows swifter every hour. I've heard some old yarn of a vast opening at each of the poles, or one of them, into which the waters of the ocean pour. They fall into one, and some say they go through and come out at the other."

Agnew laughed.

"That," said he, "is a madman's dream. In the first place, I don't believe that we are approaching the south, but the north. The warmth of the climate here shows that. Yes, we are drawing north. We shall soon emerge into warm waters and bright skies. So come along, and let us lose no more time."

I made no further objection. There was nothing else to be done, and at the very worst we could not be in greater danger while drifting on than in remaining behind. Soon, therefore, we were again in the boat, and the current swept us on as before.

The channel now was about four miles wide. On either side arose the lofty volcanoes vomiting forth flames and smoke with furious explosions; vast stones were hurled up into the air from the craters; streams of molten lava rolled down, and at intervals there fell great showers of ashes. The shores on either side were

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precipitous and rugged beyond all description, looking like fiery lava streams which had been arrested by the flood, and cooled into gloomy, overhanging cliffs. The lava rock was of a deep, dull slate-color, which at a distance looked black; and the blackness which thus succeeded to the whiteness of the snow behind us seemed like the funeral pall of nature. Through scenes like these we drifted on, and the volcanoes on either side of the channel towered on high with their fiery floods of lava, their incessant explosions, their fierce outbursts of flames, and overhead there rolled a dense black canopy of smoke—altogether forming a terrific approach to that unknown and awful pathway upon which we were going. So we passed this dread portal, and then there lay before us—what? Was it a land of life or a land of death? Who could say?

It was evening when we passed through. Night came on, and the darkness was illuminated by the fiery glow of the volcanic flames. Worn out with fatigue, we fell asleep. So the night passed, and the current bore us on until, at length, the morning came. We awoke, and now, for the first time in many days, we saw the face of the sun. The clouds had at last broken, the sky was clear, and behind us the sun was shining. That sight told us all. It showed us where we were going.

I pointed to the sun.

"Look there," said I. "There is the sun in the northern sky—behind us. We have been drifting steadily towards the south."

At this Agnew was silent, and sat looking back for a long time. There we could still see the glow of the volcanic fires, though they were now many miles away; while the sun, but lately risen, was lying on a course closer to the horizon than we had ever seen it before.

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"We are going south," said I—"to the South Pole. This swift current can have but one ending—there may be an opening at the South Pole, or a whirlpool like the Maelstrom."

Agnew looked around with a smile.

"All these notions," said he, "are dreams, or theories, or guesses. There is no evidence to prove them. Why trouble yourself about a guess? You and I can guess, and with better reason; for we have now, it seems, come farther south than any human being who has ever lived. Do not imagine that the surface of the earth is different at the poles from what it is anywhere else. If we get to the South Pole we shall see there what we have always seen—the open view of land or water, and the boundary of the horizon. As for this current, it seems to me like the Gulf Stream, and it evidently does an important work in the movement of the ocean waters. It pours on through vast fields of ice on its way to other oceans, where it will probably become united with new currents. Theories about openings at the poles, or whirlpools, must be given up. Since the Maelstrom has been found to be a fiction no one need believe in any other whirlpool. For my own part, I now believe that this current will bear us on, due south, over the pole, and then still onward, until at last we shall find ourselves in the South Pacific Ocean. So cheer up—don't be downhearted: there's still hope. We have left the ice and snow behind, and already the air is warmer. Cheer up; we may find our luck turn at any moment."

To this I had no reply to make. Agnew's confidence seemed to me to be assumed, and certainly did not alleviate my own deep gloom, nor was the scene around calculated to rouse me in the slightest degree out of my despair. The channel had now lessened to a width of not more than two miles; the shores on either side were

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precipitous cliffs, broken by occasional declivities, but all of solid rock, so dark as to be almost black, and evidently of volcanic origin. At times there arose rugged eminences, scarred and riven, indescribably dismal and appalling. There was not only an utter absence of life here in these abhorrent regions, but an actual impossibility of life which was enough to make the stoutest heart quail. The rocks looked like iron. It seemed a land of iron penetrated by this ocean stream which had made for itself a channel, and now bore us onward to a destination which was beyond all conjecture.

Through such scenes we drifted all that day. Night came, and in the skies overhead there arose a brilliant display of the aurora australis, while towards the north the volcanic fires glowed with intense lustre. That night we slept. On awaking we noticed a change in the scene. The shores, though still black and forbidding, were no longer precipitous, but sloped down gradually to the water; the climate was sensibly milder, and far away before us there arose a line of giant mountains, whose summits were covered with ice and snow that gleamed white and purple in the rays of the sun.

Suddenly Agnew gave a cry, and pointed to the opposite shore.

"Look!" he cried—"do you see? They are men!"

I looked, and there I saw plainly some moving figures that were, beyond a doubt, human beings.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE SIGHT OF HUMAN BEINGS.

The sight of human beings, thus unexpectedly found, filled us with strange feelings—feelings which I cannot explain. The country was still iron-bound and dark and forbidding, and the stream ran on in a strong current, deep, black as ink, and resistless as fate; the sky behind was lighted up by the volcanic glare which still shone from afar; and in front the view was bounded by the icy heights of a mountain chain. Here was, indeed, a strange country for a human habitation; and strange, indeed, were the human beings whom we saw.

"Shall we land?" said Agnew.

"Oh, no," said I. "Don't be hasty. The elements are sometimes kinder than men, and I feel safer here, even in this river of death, than ashore with such creatures as those."

Agnew made no reply. We watched the figures on the shore. We saw them coming down, staring and gesticulating. We drew on nearer to them till we were able to see them better. A nearer view did not improve them. They were human beings, certainly, but of such an appalling aspect that they could only be likened to animated mummies. They were small, thin, shrivelled, black, with long matted hair and hideous faces. They all had long spears, and wore about the waist short skirts that seemed to be made of the skin of some sea-fowl.

We could not imagine how these creatures lived, or

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where. There were no signs of vegetation of any kind —not a tree or a shrub. There were no animals; but there were great flocks of birds, some of which seemed different from anything that we had ever seen before. The long spears which the natives carried might possibly be used for catching these, or for fishing purposes. This thought made them seem less formidable, since they would thus be instruments of food rather than weapons of war. Meanwhile we drifted on as before, and the natives watched us, running along the shore abreast of us, so as to keep up with the boat. There seemed over a hundred of them. We could see no signs of any habitations—no huts, however humble; but we concluded that their abodes were farther inland. As for the natives themselves, the longer we looked at them the more abhorrent they grew. Even the wretched aborigines of Van Dieman's Land, who have been classed lowest in the scale of humanity, were pleasing and congenial when compared with these, and the land looked worse than Tierra del Fuego. It looked like a land of iron, and its inhabitants like fiends.

Agnew again proposed to land, but I refused.

"No," I said; "I'd rather starve for a week, and live on hope. Let us drift on. If we go on we may have hope if we choose, but if we land here we shall lose even that. Can we hope for anything from such things as these? Even if they prove friendly, can we live among them? To stay here is worse than death; our only hope is to go on."

Agnew made no reply, and we drifted on for two hours, still followed by the natives. They made no hostile demonstrations. They merely watched us, apparently from motives of curiosity. All this time we were drawing steadily nearer to the line of lofty mountains, which with their icy crests rose before us like an

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inaccessible and impassable barrier, apparently closing up all farther progress; nor was there any indication of any pass or any opening, however narrow, through which the great stream might run. Nothing was there but one unbroken wall of iron cliffs and icy summits. At last we saw that the sloping shores grew steeper, until, about a mile or two before us, they changed to towering cliffs that rose up on each side for about a thousand feet above the water; here the stream ran, and became lost to view as completely as though swallowed up by the earth.

"We can go no farther," said Agnew. "See—this stream seems to make a plunge there into the mountains. There must be some deep cañon there with cataracts. To go on is certain death. We must stop here, if only to deliberate. Say, shall we risk it among these natives? After all, there is not, perhaps, any danger among them. They are little creatures and seem harmless. They are certainly not very good-looking; but then, you know, appearances often deceive, and the devil's not so black as he's painted. What do you say?"

"I suppose we can do nothing else," said I.

In fact, I could see that we had reached a crisis in our fate. To go on seemed certain death. To stop was our only alternative; and as we were armed we should not be altogether at the mercy of these creatures. Having made this decision we acted upon it at once, for in such a current there was no time for delay; and so, seizing the oars, we soon brought the boat ashore.

As we approached, the crowd of natives stood awaiting us, and looked more repulsive than ever. We could see the emaciation of their bony frames; their toes and fingers were like birds' claws; their eyes were small

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and dull and weak, and sunken in cavernous hollows, from which they looked at us like corpses—a horrible sight. They stood quietly, however, and without any hostile demonstration, holding their spears carelessly resting upon the ground.

"I don't like the looks of them," said I. "I think I had better fire a gun."

"Why?" cried Agnew. "For Heaven's sake, man, don't hurt any of them!"

"Oh, no," said I; "I only mean to inspire a little wholesome respect."

Saying this I fired in the air. The report rang out with long echoes, and as the smoke swept away it showed us all the natives on the ground. They had seated themselves with their hands crossed on their laps, and there they sat looking at us as before, but with no manifestation of fear or even surprise. I had expected to see them run, but there was nothing of the kind. This puzzled us. Still, there was no time now for any further hesitation. The current was sweeping us towards the chasm between the cliffs, and we had to land without delay. This we did, and as I had another barrel still loaded and a pistol, I felt that with these arms and those of Agnew we should be able to defend ourselves. It was in this state of mind that we landed, and secured the boat by means of the grappling-iron.

The natives now all crowded around us, making many strange gestures, which we did not understand. Some of them bowed low, others prostrated themselves; on the whole these seemed like marks of respect, and it occurred to me that they regarded us as superior beings of some sort. It was evident that there was nothing like hostility in their minds. At the same time, the closer survey which I now made of them

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"THE NATIVES NOW ALL CROWDED AROUND US, MAKING MANY STRANGE GESTURES."

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filled me with renewed horror; their meagre frames, small, watery, lack-lustre eyes, hollow, cavernous sockets, sunken cheeks, protruding teeth, claw-like fingers, and withered skins, all made them look more than ever like animated mummies, and I shrank from them involuntarily, as one shrinks from contact with a corpse.

Agnew, however, was very different, and it was evident that he felt no repugnance whatever. He bowed and smiled at them, and shook hands with half a dozen of them in succession. The hand-shaking was a new thing to them, but they accepted it in a proper spirit, and renewed their bows and prostrations. After this they all offered us their lances. This certainly seemed like an act of peace and good-will. I shook my head and declined to touch them; but Agnew accepted one of them, and offered his rifle in return. The one to whom he offered it refused to take it. He seemed immensely gratified because Agnew had taken his lance, and the others seemed disappointed at his refusal to take theirs. But I felt my heart quake as I saw him offer his rifle, and still more when he offered it to one or two others, and only regained my composure as I perceived that his offer was refused by all.

They now made motions to us to follow, and we all set forth together.

"My dear More," said Agnew, cheerily, "they're not a bad lot. They mean well. They can't help their looks. You're too suspicious and reserved. Let's make friends with them, and get them to help us. Do as I do."

I tried to, but found it impossible, for my repugnance was immovable. It was like the horror which one feels towards rats, cockroaches, earwigs, or serpents. It was something that defied reason. These creatures seemed like human vermin.

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We marched inland for about half a mile, crossed a ridge, and came to a valley, or rather a kind of hollow, at the other side of which we found a cave with a smouldering fire in front. The fire was made of coal, which must exist here somewhere. It was highly bituminous, and burned with a great blaze.

The day was now drawing to a close; far away I could see the lurid glow of the volcanoes, which grew brighter as the day declined: above, the skies twinkled with innumerable stars, and the air was filled with the moan of rushing waters.

We entered the cave. As we did so the natives heaped coal upon the fire, and the flames arose, lighting up the interior. We found here a number of women and children, who looked at us without either fear or curiosity. The children looked like little dwarfs; the women were hags, hideous beyond description. One old woman in particular, who seemed to be in authority, was actually terrible in her awful and repulsive ugliness. A nightmare dream never furnished forth a more frightful object. This nightmare hag prostrated herself before each of us with such an air of self-immolation that she looked as though she wished us to kill her at once. The rough cave, the red light of the fire, all made the scene more awful; and a wild thought came to me that we had actually reached, while yet living, the infernal world, and that this was the abode of devils. Yet their actions, it must be confessed, were far from devilish. Every one seemed eager to serve us. Some spread out couches formed of the skins of birds for us to sit on; others attended to the fire; others offered us gifts of large and beautiful feathers, together with numerous trinkets of rare and curious workmanship. This kind attention on their part was a great puzzle to me, and I could not help suspecting that be-

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neath all this there must be some sinister design. Resolving to be prepared for the worst, I quietly reloaded the empty barrel of my rifle and watched with the utmost vigilance. As for Agnew, he took it all in the most unsuspicious manner. He made signs to them, shook hands with them, accepted their gifts, and even tried to do the agreeable to the formidable hags and the child-fiends around him. He soon attracted the chief attention, and while all looked admiringly upon him, I was left to languish in comparative neglect.

At length a savory odor came through the cave, and a repast was spread before us. It consisted of some large fowl that looked like a goose, but was twice as large as the largest turkey that I had ever seen. The taste was like that of a wild-goose, but rather fishy. Still to us it seemed delicious, for our prolonged diet of raw seal had made us ready to welcome any other food whatever; and this fowl, whatever it was, would not have been unwelcome to any hungry man. It was evident that these people lived on the flesh of birds of various sorts. All around us we saw the skins of birds dried with the feathers on, and used for clothing, for mats, and for ornaments.

The repast being finished, we both felt greatly strengthened and refreshed. Agnew continued to cultivate his new acquaintances, and seeing me holding back, he said,

"More, old fellow, these good people give me to understand that there is another place better than this, and want me to go with them. Will you go?"

At this a great fear seized me.

"Don't go!" I cried—"don't go! We are close by the boat here, and if anything happens we can easily get to it."

Agnew laughed in my face.

"Why, you don't mean to tell me," said he, "that

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you are still suspicious, and after that dinner? Why, man, if they wanted to harm us, would they feast us in this style? Nonsense, man! Drop your suspicions and come along."

I shook my head obstinately.

"Well," said he, "if I thought there was anything in your suspicions I would stay by you; but I'm confident they mean nothing but kindness, so I'm going off to see the place."

"You'll be back again?" said I.

"Oh, yes," said he, "of course I'll come back, and sleep here."

With these words he left, and nearly all the people accompanied him. I was left behind with the women and children and about a dozen men. These men busied themselves with some work over bird-skins; the women were occupied with some other work over feathers. No one took any notice of me. There did not seem to be any restraint upon me, nor was I watched in any way. Once the nightmare hag came and offered me a small roasted fowl, about the size of a woodcock. I declined it, but at the same time this delicate attention certainly surprised me.

I was now beginning to struggle with some success against my feelings of abhorrence, when suddenly I caught sight of something which chased away every other thought, and made my blood turn cold in my veins. It was something outside. At the mouth of the cave—by the fire which was still blazing bright, and lighting up the scene—I saw four men who had just come to the cave: they were carrying something which I at first supposed to be a sick or wounded companion. On reaching the fire they put it down, and I saw, with a thrill of dismay, that their burden was neither sick nor wounded, but dead, for the corpse lay rigid as they

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had placed it. Then I saw the nightmare hag approach it with a knife. An awful thought came to me—the crowning horror! The thought soon proved to be but too well founded. The nightmare hag began to cut, and in an instant had detached the arm of the corpse, which she thrust among the coals in the very place where lately she had cooked the fowl. Then she went back for more.

For a moment my brain reeled, and I gasped for breath. Then I rose and staggered out, I know not how. No one tried to stop me, nor did any one follow me; and, for my part, I was ready to blow out the brains of the first who dared to approach me. In this way I reached the open air, and passed by the hag and the four men as they were busy at their awful work. But at this point I was observed and followed. A number of men and women came after me, jabbering their uncouth language and gesticulating. I warned them off, angrily. They persisted, and though none of them were armed, yet I saw that they were unwilling to have me leave the cave, and I supposed that they would try to prevent me by force.

The absence of Agnew made my position a difficult one. Had it not been for this I would have burst through them and fled to the boat; but as long as he was away I felt bound to wait; and though I longed to fly, I could not for his sake. The boat seemed to be a haven of rest. I longed to be in her once more, and drift away, even if it should be to my death. Nature was here less terrible than man; and it seemed better to drown in the waters, to perish amid rocks and whirlpools, than to linger here amid such horrors as these. These people were not like human beings. The vilest and lowest savages that I had ever seen were not so odious as these. A herd of monkeys would be far more

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congenial, a flock of wolves less abhorrent. They had the caricature of the human form; they were the lowest of humanity; their speech was a mockery of language; their faces devilish, their kindness a cunning pretence; and most hideous of all was the nightmare hag that prepared the cannibal repast.

I could not begin hostilities, for I had to wait for Agnew; so I stood and looked, and then walked away for a little distance. They followed me closely, with eager words and gesticulations, though as yet no one touched me or threatened me. Their tone seemed rather one of persuasion. After a few paces I stood still, with all of them around me. The horrible repast showed plainly all that was in store for us. They received us kindly and fed us well only to devote us to the most abhorrent of deaths. Agnew, in his mad confidence, was only insuring his own doom. He was putting himself completely in the power of devils, who were incapable of pity and strangers to humanity. To make friends with such fiends was impossible, and I felt sure that our only plan was to rule by terror—to seize, to slay, to conquer. But still I had to wait for him, and did not dare to resort to violence while he was absent; so I waited, while the savages gathered round me, contenting themselves with guarding me, and neither touching me nor threatening me. And all this time the hag went on, intent on her preparation of the horrible repast.

While standing there looking, listening, waiting for Agnew, I noticed many things. Far away the volcanoes blazed, and the northern sky was red with a lurid light. There, too, higher up, the moon was shining overhead, the sky was gleaming with stars; and all over the heavens there shone the lustre of the aurora australis, brighter than any I had ever seen—surpassing

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the moon and illuminating all. It lighted up the haggard faces of the devils around me, and it again seemed to me as though I had died and gone to the land of woe—an iron land, a land of despair, with lurid fires all aglow and faces of fear.

Suddenly, there burst upon my ears the report of a gun, which sounded like a thunder-peal, and echoed in long reverberations. At once I understood it. My fears had proved true. These savages had enticed Agnew away to destroy him. In an instant I burst through the crowd around me, and ran wildly in the direction of that sound, calling his name, as I ran, at the top of my voice.

I heard a loud cry; then another report. I hurried on, shouting his name in a kind of frenzy. The strange courage of these savages had already impressed me deeply. They did not fear our guns. They were all attacking him, and he was alone, fighting for his life.

Then there was another report; it was his pistol. I still ran on, and still shouted to him.

At last I received an answer. He had perhaps heard me, and was answering, or, at any rate, he was warning me.

"More," he cried, "fly, fly, fly to the boat! Save yourself!"

"Where are you?" I cried, as I still rushed on.

"Fly, More, fly! Save yourself! You can't save me. I'm lost. Fly for your life!"

Judging from his cries, he did not seem far away. I hurried on. I could see nothing of him. All the time the savages followed me. None were armed; but it seemed to me that they were preparing to fling themselves upon me and overpower me with their numbers. They would capture me alive, I thought, bind me, and carry me back, reserving me for a future time!

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I turned and waved them back. They took no notice of my gesture. Then I ran on once more. They followed. They could not run so fast as I did, and so I gained on them rapidly, still shouting to Agnew. But there was no response. I ran backward and forward, crossing and recrossing, doubling and turning, pursued all the time by the savages. At last, in rage and despair, I fired upon them, and one of them fell. But, to my dismay, the others did not seem to care one whit; they did not stop for one moment, but pursued as before.

My situation was now plain in all its truth. They had enticed Agnew away; they had attacked him. He had fought, and had been overpowered. He had tried to give me warning. His last words had been for me to fly—to fly: yes, for he well knew that it was better far for me to go to death through the raging torrent than to meet the fate which had fallen upon himself. For him there was now no more hope. That he was lost was plain. If he were still alive he would call to me; but his voice had been silenced for some time. All was over, and that noble heart that had withstood so bravely and cheerily the rigors of the storm, and the horrors of our desperate voyage, had been stilled in death by the vilest of miscreants.

I paused for a moment. Even though Agnew was dead, I could not bear to leave him, but felt as though I ought to share his fate. The savages came nearer. At their approach I hesitated no longer. That fate was too terrible: I must fly.

But before I fled I turned in fury to wreak vengeance upon them for their crimes. Full of rage and despair, I discharged my remaining rifle-barrel into the midst of the crowd. Then I fled towards the boat. On the way I had a frightful thought that she might have been sent adrift; but, on approaching the place, I found her

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there just as I had left her. The savages, with their usual fearlessness, still pursued. For a moment I stood on the shore, with the grapple in my hand and the boat close by, and as they came near I discharged my pistol into the midst of them. Then I sprang into the boat; the swift current bore me away, and in a few minutes the crowd of pursuing demons disappeared from view.

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CHAPTER V.

THE TORRENT SWEEPING UNDER THE MOUNTAINS.

The boat drifted on. The light given by the aurora and the low moon seem to grow fainter; and as I looked behind I saw that the distant glow from the volcanic fires had become more brilliant in the increasing darkness. The sides of the channel grew steeper, until at last they became rocky precipices, rising to an unknown height. The channel itself grew narrower, till from a width of two miles it had contracted to a tenth of those dimensions; but with this lessening width the waters seemed to rush far more swiftly. Here I drifted helplessly, and saw the gloomy, rocky cliffs sweep past me as I was hurled onward on the breast of the tremendous flood. I was in despair. The fate of Agnew had prepared me for my own, and I was only thankful that my fate, since it was inevitable, would be less appalling. Death seemed certain, and my chief thought now was as to the moment when it would come. I was prepared. I felt that I could meet it calmly, sternly, even thankfully; far better was a death here amid the roar of waters than at the hands of those abhorrent beings by whose treachery my friend had fallen.

As I went on, the precipices rose higher and seemed to overhang, the channel grew narrower, the light grew fainter, until at last all around me grew dark. I was floating at the bottom of a vast chasm, where the sides seemed to rise precipitously for thousands of feet, where neither watery flood nor rocky wall was visible, and

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where, far above, I could see the line of sky between the summits of the cliffs, and watch the glowing stars. And as I watched them there came to me the thought that this was my last sight on earth, and I could only hope that the life which was so swiftly approaching its end might live again somewhere among those glittering orbs. So I thought; and with these thoughts I drifted on, I cannot tell how long, until at length there appeared a vast black mass, where the open sky above me terminated, and where the lustre of the stars and the light of the heavens were all swallowed up in utter darkness.

This, then, I thought, is the end. Here, amid this darkness, I must make the awful plunge and find my death. I fell upon my knees in the bottom of the boat and prayed. As I knelt there the boat drew nearer, the black mass grew blacker. The current swept me on. There were no breakers; there was no phosphorescent sparkle of seething waters, and no whiteness of foam. I thought that I was on the brink of some tremendous cataract a thousand times deeper than Niagara; some fall where the waters plunged into the depths of the earth; and where, gathering for the terrific descent, all other movements — all dashings and writhings and twistings—were obliterated and lost in the one overwhelming onward rush. Suddenly all grew dark—dark beyond all expression; the sky above was in a moment snatched from view; I had been flung into some tremendous cavern; and there, on my knees, with terror in my heart, I waited for death.

The moments passed, and death delayed to come. The awful plunge was still put off; and though I remained on my knees and waited long, still the end came not. The waters seemed still, the boat motionless. It was borne upon the surface of a vast stream as smooth as glass; but who could tell how deep that

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stream was, or how wide? At length I rose from my knees and sank down upon the seat of the boat, and tried to peer through the gloom. In vain. Nothing was visible. It was the very blackness of darkness. I listened, but heard nothing save a deep, dull, droning sound, which seemed to fill all the air and make it all tremulous with its vibrations. I tried to collect my thoughts. I recalled that old theory which had been in my mind before this, and which I had mentioned to Agnew. This was the notion that at each pole there is a vast opening; that into one of them all the waters of the ocean pour themselves, and, after passing through the earth, come out at the other pole, to pass about its surface in innumerable streams. It was a wild fancy, which I had laughed at under other circumstances, but which now occurred to me once more, when I was overwhelmed with despair, and my mind was weakened by the horrors which I had experienced; and I had a vague fear that I had been drawn into the very channel through which the ocean waters flowed in their course to that terrific, that unparalleled abyss. Still, there was as yet no sign whatever of anything like a descent, for the boat was on even keel, and perfectly level as before, and it was impossible for me to tell whether I was moving swiftly or slowly, or standing perfectly still; for in that darkness there were no visible objects by which I could find out the rate of my progress; and as those who go up in balloons are utterly insensible of motion, so was I on those calm but swift waters.

At length there came into view something which arrested my attention and engrossed all my thoughts. It was a faint glow that at first caught my gaze; and, on turning to see it better, I saw a round red spot glowing like fire. I had not seen this before. It looked like the moon when it rises from behind clouds, and

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glows red and lurid from the horizon; and so this glowed, but not with the steady light of the moon, for the light was fitful, and sometimes flashed into a baleful brightness, which soon subsided into a dimmer lustre. New alarm arose within me, for this new sight suggested something more terrible than anything that I had thus far thought of. This, then, I thought, was to be the end of my voyage; this was my goal—a pit of fire, into which I should be hurled! Would it be well, I thought, to wait for such a fate, and experience such a death-agony? Would it not be better for me to take my own life before I should know the worst? I took my pistol and loaded it, so as to be prepared, but hesitated to use it until my fate should be more apparent. So I sat, holding my pistol, prepared to use it, watching the light, and awaiting the time when the glowing fires should make all further hope impossible. But time passed, and the light grew no brighter; on the contrary, it seemed to grow fainter. There was also another change. Instead of shining before me, it appeared more on my left. From this it went on changing its position until at length it was astern. All the time it continued to grow fainter, and it seemed certain that I was moving away from it rather than towards it. In the midst of this there occurred a new thought, which seemed to account for this light—this was, that it arose from these same volcanoes which had illuminated the northern sky when I was ashore, and followed me still with their glare. I had been carried into this darkness, through some vast opening which now lay behind me, disclosing the red volcano glow, and this it was that caused that roundness and resemblance to the moon. I saw that I was still moving on away from that light as before, and that its changing position was due to the turning of the boat as the water drifted it along, now stern foremost,

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now sidewise, and again bow foremost. From this it seemed plainly evident that the waters had borne me into some vast cavern of unknown extent, which went under the mountains—a subterranean channel, whose issue I could not conjecture. Was this the beginning of that course which should ultimately become a plunge deep down into some unutterable abyss? or might I ever hope to emerge again into the light of day—perhaps in some other ocean—some land of ice and frost and eternal night? But the old theory of the flow of water through the earth had taken hold of me and could not be shaken off. I knew some scientific men held the opinion that the earth's interior is a mass of molten rock and pent-up fire, and that the earth itself had once been a burning orb, which had cooled down at the surface; yet, after all, this was only a theory, and there were other theories which were totally different. As a boy I had read wild works of fiction about lands in the interior of the earth, with a sun at the centre, which gave them the light of a perpetual day. These, I knew, were only the creations of fiction; yet, after all, it seemed possible that the earth might contain vast hollow spaces in its interior—realms of eternal darkness, caverns in comparison with which the hugest caves on the surface were but the tiniest cells. I was now being borne on to these. In that case there might be no sudden plunge, after all. The stream might run on for many thousand miles through this terrific cavern gloom, in accordance with natural laws; and I might thus live, and drift on in this darkness, until I should die a lingering death of horror and despair.

There was no possible way of forming any estimate as to speed. All was dark, and even the glow behind was fading away; nor could I make any conjecture whatever as to the size of the channel. At the opening it

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had been contracted and narrow; but here it might have expanded itself to miles, and its vaulted top might reach almost to the summit of the lofty mountains. While sight thus failed me, sound was equally unavailing, for it was always the same—a sustained and unintermittent roar, a low, droning sound, deep and terrible, with no variations of dashing breakers or rushing rapids or falling cataracts. Vague thoughts of final escape came and went; but in such a situation hope could not be sustained. The thick darkness oppressed the soul; and at length even the glow of the distant volcanoes, which had been gradually diminishing, grew dimmer and fainter, and finally faded out altogether. That seemed to me to be my last sight of earthly things. After this nothing was left. There was no longer for me such a thing as sight; there was nothing but darkness—perpetual and eternal night. I was buried in a cavern of rushing waters, to which there would be no end, where I should be borne onward helplessly by the resistless tide to a mysterious and an appalling doom.

The darkness grew so intolerable that I longed for something to dispel it, if only for a moment. I struck a match. The air was still, and the flame flashed out, lighting up the boat and showing the black water around me. This made me eager to see more. I loaded both barrels of the rifle, keeping my pistol for another purpose, and then fired one of them. There was a tremendous report, that rang in my ears like a hundred thunder-volleys, and rolled and reverberated far along, and died away in endless echoes. The flash lighted up the scene for an instant, and for an instant only; like the sudden lightning, it revealed all around. I saw a wide expanse of water, black as ink—a Stygian pool; but no rocks were visible, and it seemed as though I had been carried into a subterranean sea.

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I loaded the empty barrel and waited. The flash of light had revealed nothing, yet it had distracted my thoughts, and the work of reloading was an additional distraction. Anything was better than inaction. I did not wish to waste my ammunition, yet I thought that an occasional shot might serve some good purpose, if it was only to afford me some relief from despair.

And now, as I sat with the rifle in my hands, I was aware of a sound—new, exciting, different altogether from the murmur of innumerable waters that filled my ears, and in sharp contrast with the droning echoes of the rushing flood. It was a sound that spoke of life. I heard quick, heavy pantings, as of some great living thing; and with this there came the noise of regular movements in the water, and the foaming and gurgling of waves. It was as though some living, breathing creature were here, not far away, moving through these midnight waters; and with this discovery there came a new fear—the fear of pursuit. I thought that some sea-monster had scented me in my boat, and had started to attack me. This new fear aroused me to action. It was a danger quite unlike any other which I had ever known; yet the fear which it inspired was a feeling that roused me to action, and prompted me, even though the coming danger might be as sure as death, to rise against it and resist to the last. So I stood up with my rifle and listened, with all my soul in my sense of hearing. The sounds arose more plainly. They had come nearer. They were immediately in front. I raised my rifle and took aim. Then in quick succession two reports thundered out with tremendous uproar and interminable echoes, but the long reverberations were unheeded in the blaze of sudden light and the vision that was revealed. For there full before me I saw, though but for an instant, a tremendous sight. It was a vast monster,

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"I RAISED MY RIFLE AND TOOK AIM. THEN IN QUICK SUCCESSION TWO REPORTS THUNDERED OUT WITH TREMENDOUS UPROAR."

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moving in the waters against the stream and towards the boat. Its head was raised high, its eyes were inflamed with a baleful light, its jaws, opened wide, bristled with sharp teeth, and it had a long neck joined to a body of enormous bulk, with a tail that lashed all the water into foam. It was but for an instant that I saw it, and then with a sudden plunge the monster dived, while at the same moment all was as dark as before.

Full of terror and excitement, I loaded my rifle again and waited, listening for a renewal of the noise. I felt sure that the monster, balked of his prey, would return with redoubled fury, and that I should have to renew the conflict. I felt that the dangers of the subterranean passage and of the rushing waters had passed away, and that a new peril had arisen from the assault of this monster of the deep. Nor was it this one alone that was to be dreaded. Where one was, others were sure to be; and if this one should pass me by it would only leave me to be assailed by monsters of the same kind, and these would probably increase in number as I advanced farther into this realm of darkness. And yet, in spite of these grisly thoughts, I felt less of horror than before, for the fear which I had was now associated with action; and as I stood waiting for the onset and listening for the approach of the enemy, the excitement that ensued was a positive relief from the dull despair into which I had sunk but a moment before.

Yet, though I waited for a new attack, I waited in vain. The monster did not come back. Either the flash and the noise had terrified him, or the bullets had hit him, or else in his vastness he had been indifferent to so feeble a creature as myself; but whatever may have been the cause, he did not emerge again out of the darkness and silence into which he had sunk. For a long time I stood waiting; then I sat down, still watchful,

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still listening, but without any result, until at length I began to think that there was no chance of any new attack. Indeed, it seemed now as though there had been no attack at all, but that the monster had been swimming at random without any thought of me. in which case my rifle-flashes had terrified him more than his fearful form had terrified me. On the whole this incident had greatly benefited me. It had roused me from my despair. I grew reckless, and felt a disposition to acquiesce in whatever fate might have in store for me.

And now, worn out with fatigue and exhausted from long watchfulness and anxiety, I sank down in the bottom of the boat and fell into a deep sleep.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW WORLD.

How long I slept I do not know. My sleep was profound, yet disturbed by troubled dreams, in which I lived over again all the eventful scenes of the past; and these were all intermingled in the wildest confusion. The cannibals beckoned to us from the peak, and we landed between the two volcanoes. There the body of the dead sailor received us, and afterwards chased us to the boat. Then came snow and volcanic eruptions, and we drifted amid icebergs and molten lava until we entered an iron portal and plunged into darkness. Here there were vast swimming monsters and burning orbs of fire and thunderous cataracts falling from inconceivable heights, and the sweep of immeasurable tides and the circling of infinite whirlpools; while in my ears there rang the never-ending roar of remorseless waters that came after us, with all their waves and billows rolling upon us. It was a dream in which all the material terrors of the past were renewed; but these were all as nothing when compared with a certain deep underlying feeling that possessed my soul—a sense of loss irretrievable, an expectation of impending doom, a drear and immitigable despair.

In the midst of this I awoke. It was with a sudden start, and I looked all around in speechless bewilderment. The first thing of which I was conscious was a great blaze of light—light so lately lost, and supposed to be lost forever, but now filling all the universe—bright, brill-

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iant, glowing, bringing hope and joy and gladness, with all the splendor of deep blue skies and the multitudinous laughter of ocean waves that danced and sparkled in the sun. I flung up my arms and laughed aloud. Then I burst into tears, and, falling on my knees, I thanked the Almighty Ruler of the skies for this marvellous deliverance.

Rising from my knees, I looked around, and once more amazement overwhelmed me. I saw a long line of mountains towering up to immeasurable heights, their summits covered with eternal ice and snow. There the sun blazed low in the sky, elevated but a few degrees above the mountain crests, which gleamed in gold and purple under its fiery rays. The sun seemed enlarged to unusual dimensions, and the mountains ran away on every side like the segment of some infinite circle. At the base of the mountains lay a land all green with vegetation, where cultivated fields were visible, and vineyards and orchards and groves, together with forests of palm and all manner of trees of every variety of hue, which ran up the sides of the mountains till they reached the limits of vegetation and the regions of snow and ice.

Here in all directions there were unmistakable signs of human life—the outlines of populous cities and busy towns and hamlets ; roads winding far away along the plain or up the mountain-sides, and mighty works of industry in the shape of massive structures, terraced slopes, long rows of arches, ponderous pyramids, and battlemented walls.

From the land I turned to the sea. I saw before me an expanse of water intensely blue—an extent so vast that never before in all my ocean voyages had anything appeared at all comparable with it. Out at sea, wherever I had been, the water had always limited the view ; the horizon had never seemed far away ; ships soon sank

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below it, and the visible surface of the earth was thus always contracted; but here, to my bewilderment, the horizon appeared to be removed to an immeasurable distance and raised high in the air, while the waters were prolonged endlessly. Starting from where I was, they went away to inconceivable distances, and the view before me seemed like a watery declivity reaching for a thousand miles, till it approached the horizon far up in the sky. Nor was it any delusion of the senses that caused this unparalleled spectacle. I was familiar with the phenomena of the mirage, and knew well that there was nothing of that kind here; for the mirage always shows great surfaces of stillness, or a regular vibration—glassy tides and indistinct distances; but here everything was sharply defined in the clear atmosphere: the sky overhung a deep blue vault; the waves danced and sparkled in the sun; the waters rolled and foamed on every side; and the fresh breeze, as it blew over the ocean, brought with it such exhilarating influences that it acted upon me like some reviving cordial.

From the works of nature I turned to those of man. These were visible everywhere: on the land, in cities and cultivated fields and mighty constructions; on the sea, in floating craft, which appeared wherever I turned my eyes—boats like those of fishermen, ships long and low, some like galleys, propelled by a hundred oars, others provided with one huge square-sail, which enabled them to run before the wind. They were unlike any ships which I had ever seen; for neither in the Mediterranean nor in Chinese waters were there any craft like these, and they reminded me rather of those ancient galleys which I had seen in pictures.

I was lost in wonder as to where I was, and what land this could be to which I had been brought. I had not plunged into the interior of the earth, but I had

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been carried under the mountains, and had emerged again into the glad light of the sun. Could it be possible, I thought, that Agnew's hope had been realized, and that I had been carried into the warm regions of the South Pacific Ocean? Yet in the South Pacific there could be no place like this—no immeasurable expanse of waters, no horizon raised mountain high. It seemed like a vast basin-shaped world, for all around me the surface appeared to rise, and I was in what looked like a depression; yet I knew that the basin and the depression were an illusion, and that this appearance was due to the immense extent of level surface with the environment of lofty mountains. I had crossed the antarctic circle; I had been borne onward for an immense distance. Over all the known surface of the earth no one had ever seen anything like this; there were but two places where such an immeasurable plain was possible, and those were at the flattened poles. Where I was I now knew well. I had reached the antarctic pole. Here the earth was flat—an immense level with no roundness to lessen the reach of the horizon, but an almost even surface that gave an unimpeded view for hundreds of miles.

The subterranean channel had rushed through the mountains and had carried me here. Here came all the waters of the Northern ocean pouring into this vast polar sea, perhaps to issue forth from it by some similar passage. Here, then, was the South Pole—a world by itself: and how different from that terrible, that iron land on the other side of the mountains!—not a world of ice and frost, but one of beauty and light, with a climate that was almost tropical in its warmth, and lands that were covered with the rank luxuriance of a teeming vegetable life. I had passed from that outer world to this inner one, and the passage was from death unto life, from agony and despair to sunlight and splendor and joy.

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Above all, in all around me that which most impressed me now was the rich and superabundant life, and a warmth of air which made me think of India. It was an amazing and an unaccountable thing, and I could only attribute it to the flattening of the poles, which brought the surface nearer to the supposed central fires of the earth, and therefore created a heat as great as that of the equatorial regions. Here I found a tropical climate—a land warmed not by the sun, but from the earth itself. Or another cause might be found in the warm ocean currents. Whatever the true one might be, I was utterly unable to form a conjecture.

But I had no time for such speculations as these. After the first emotions of wonder and admiration had somewhat subsided, I began to experience other sensations. I began to remember that I had eaten nothing for a length of time that I had no means of calculating, and to look around to see if there was any way of satisfying my hunger. The question arose now, What was to be done? After my recent terrible experience I naturally shrank from again committing myself to the tender mercies of strange tribes; yet further thought and examination showed me that the people of this strange land must be very different from those frightful savages on the other side of the mountains. Everywhere I beheld the manifest signs of cultivation and civilization. Still, I knew that even civilized people would not necessarily be any kinder than savages, and that I might be seized and flung into hopeless imprisonment or slavery.

So I hesitated, yet what could I do? My hunger was beginning to be insupportable. I had reached a place where I had to choose between starvation on the one hand, or a venture among these people on the other. To go back was impossible. Who could breast those waters in the tremendous subterranean channel, or force his

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way back through such appalling dangers? Or, if that were possible, who could ever hope to breast those mighty currents beyond, or work his way amid everlasting ice and immeasurable seas? No; return was impossible. I had been flung into this world of wonders, and here would be my home for the remainder of my days; though I could not now imagine whether those days would be passed in peace or in bitter slavery and sorrow. Yet the decision must be made and the risk must be run. It must be so. I must land here, venture among these people, and trust in that Providence which had hitherto sustained me.

Having thus resolved at all hazards to try my fate, I rowed in towards the shore. Thus far I had seen galleys passing and small boats, but they had taken no notice of me, for the reason that they were too far away to perceive anything about me that differed from any other boat; but now, as I rowed, I noticed a galley coming down towards me. She seemed to be going in towards the shore at the very point at which I was aiming, and her course and mine must soon meet if I continued to row. After some hesitation I concluded to make signals to her, so as to attract attention; for, now that I had resolved to venture among the people here, I was anxious to end my suspense as soon as possible. So I continued rowing, and gradually drew nearer. The galley was propelled by oars, of which there were fifty on either side. The stern was raised, and covered in like a cabin. At length I ceased rowing, and sat watching her. I soon saw that I was noticed, but this did not occur till the galley was close by me—so close, indeed, that I thought they would pass without perceiving me. I raised my hands, waved them, and gave a cry. The galley at once stopped, a boat was lowered, and some men descended and rowed towards me.

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They were men of strange appearance—very small in stature and slender in frame. Their hair was black and straight, their features were quite regular, and their general expression was one of great gentleness. I was surprised to notice that they kept their eyes almost closed, as though they were weak and troubled by the glare of the sun. With their half-closed eyes they blinked at me, and then one who appeared to be their chief spoke to me. I understood not a word; and then I answered him in English, which, of course, was equally unintelligible to him. I then made signs, pointing to the mountains and endeavoring to make known to him that I had come from beyond them—that I had suffered shipwreck, that I had drifted here, and that I needed assistance. Of all this it was quite evident that they understood nothing except the fact that I needed help. The moment that they comprehended this they took me in tow and rowed back to the galley.

I found the galley to be about one hundred and fifty feet in length. For about two thirds of this length forward it was open and filled with seats, where there were about a hundred rowers, who all looked like those that I had first seen, all being of small stature, slender frames, and, moreover, all being apparently distressed by the sunlight. There was in all of them the same mild and gentle expression. In complexion and general outline of features they were not unlike Arabs, but they were entirely destitute of that hardness and austerity which the latter have. They all had beards, which were dressed in a peculiar way in plaits. Their costume varied. The rowers wore a coarse tunic, with a girdle of rope. The officers wore tunics of fine cloth and very elegant mantles, richly embroidered, and with borders of down. They all wore broad-brimmed hats, and the one who seemed to be chief had on his some golden ornaments.

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Here once more I tried to explain to them who I was. They looked at me, examining me all over, inspecting my gun, pistol, coat, trousers, boots, and hat, and talking all the time among themselves. They did not touch me, but merely showed the natural curiosity which is felt at the sight of a foreigner who has appeared unexpectedly. There was a scrupulous delicacy and a careful and even ceremonious politeness in their attitude towards me which was at once amazing and delightful. All fear and anxiety had now left me; in the gentle manners and amiable faces of these people I saw enough to assure me of kind treatment; and in my deep joy and gratitude for this even my hunger was for a time forgotten.

At length the chief motioned to me to follow him. He led the way to the cabin, where, opening the door, he entered, and I followed, after which the others came in also, and then the door was shut. At first I could see nothing. There were no windows whatever, and only one or two slight crevices through which the light came. After a time my eyes grew more accustomed to the darkness, and I could see that the cabin was a spacious apartment, adorned with rich hangings of some unknown material. There was a large table and seats. Taking me by the hand, the chief led me to this, where I seated myself, while the others remained standing. Then some of them went away, and soon returned with food and drink. The food was of different kinds—some tasting like goose, others like turkey, others like partridge. It was all the flesh of fowls, though, judging from the slices before me, they must have been of great size. I wondered much at the behavior of the officers of the ship, who all, and the chief himself more than all, stood and waited upon me; but it was a new world, and I supposed that this must be the fashion; so I made no objections, but accepted the situation and ate with a thankful heart.

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As the first keenness of my appetite was satisfied I had more leisure to make observations. I noticed that the eyes of my new friends no longer blinked; they were wide open; and, so far as I could make them out, their faces were much improved. Weakness of eyes seemed common among these people, and therefore the officers had their cabin darkened, while the unfortunate rowers had to labor in the blazing sun. Such was my conclusion, and the fact reminded me of the miserable fellahin of Egypt, who have ophthalmia from the blazing sun and burning sand.

After the repast they brought me water in a basin, and all stood around me. One held the basin, another a towel, another a flask, another took a sponge and proceeded to wash my face and hands. This was all strange to me, yet there was nothing left for me but submission. Then the chief, who had stood looking on with a smile on his face, took off his rich furred mantle and handed it to me. I was half inclined to refuse it, but was afraid of giving offence, so I accepted it, and he himself fastened it around my shoulders. The others seemed actually to envy the chief, as though he had gained some uncommon good-fortune. Then they offered me various drinks, of which I tasted several kinds. Some were sweet waters of different flavors, others tasted like mild wine, one was a fermented drink, light, sweet, and very agreeable to the palate. I now wished to show my generous entertainers that I was grateful; so I raised my cup, bowed to all of them, particularly the chief, and drank their health. They all watched this ceremony with very sober faces, and I could not quite make out whether they took my meaning or not. They certainly did not look pleased, and it seemed to me as though they felt hurt at any expression of gratitude, so I concluded for the future to abstain from all such demon-

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strations. Yet with every moment the manners of these people grew more bewildering. It was strange, indeed, for me to find myself so suddenly the centre of interest and of generous intentions. For a moment the thought occurred to me that they regarded me as some wonderful being with superior powers, and were trying to propitiate me by these services; yet I soon saw that these services were not at all acts of propitiation; they looked rather like those loving and profuse attentions which a family showers down upon some dear one long absent and at last returned, and with this my wonder grew greater than ever.

The galley had long since resumed her progress. I heard the steady beat of the oars as they all moved in time, and at length the motion ceased. The chief then signed to me and went out. I followed, and the rest came after. And now, as I emerged from the gloom of the cabin, I found myself once more in the glorious light of day, and saw that we had reached the land. The galley was hauled up alongside a stone quay, and on the shore there were buildings and walls and trees and people. The chief went ashore at once, and I accompanied him. We walked for some distance along a road with stone walls on either side, from behind which there arose trees that from a distance had looked like palms. I now found them to be giant ferns, arching overhead with their broad fanlike leaves and branches in dense masses, making the roadway quite dark in the shadow. Astonished as I was at the sight of these trees, I soon forgot them in a still more astonishing sight, for after going onward about a hundred paces I stopped, and found myself in a wide space where four cross-roads met. Here there were three birds of gigantic stature. They had vast bodies, short legs, short necks, and seemed as large as an ordinary-sized ox. Their wings were short,

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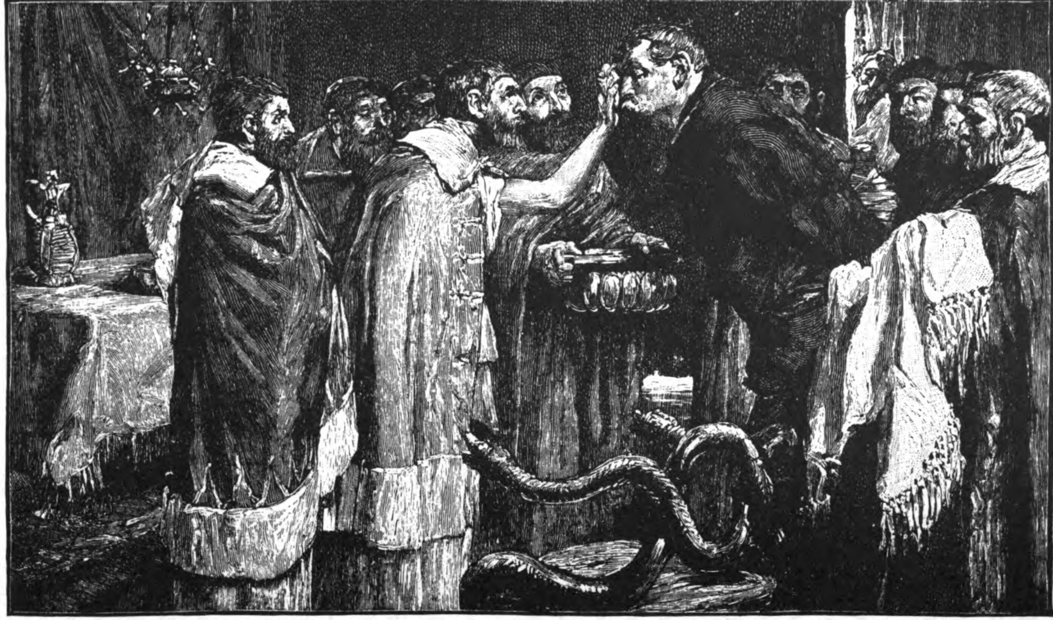

"ANOTHER TOOK A SPONGE AND PROCEEDED TO WASH MY FACE AND HANDS."

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and evidently could not be used for flight; their beaks were like that of a sea-gull; each one had a man on his back, and was harnessed to a car. The chief motioned to me to enter one of these cars. I did so. He followed, and thereupon the driver started the bird, which set forth with long, rapid strides, at a pace as fast as that of a trotting horse. So astonished was I that for some time I did not notice anything else; but at length, when my first feeling had subsided, I began to regard other objects. All the way the dense fern foliage arched overhead, throwing down deep shadows. They grew on either side in dense rows, but between their stalks I could see the country beyond, which lay all bright in the sunlight. Here were broad fields, all green with verdure; farther away arose clumps of tree-ferns; at every step of the way new vistas opened; amid the verdure and the foliage were the roofs of structures that looked like pavilions, and more massive edifices with pyramidal roofs. Our road constantly ascended, and at length we came to a crossing. This was a wide terrace at the slope of the mountain; on the lower side was a row of massive stone edifices with pyramidal roofs, while on the upper there were portals which seemed to open into excavated caverns. Here, too, on either side arose the giant ferns, overarching and darkening the terrace with their deep shadow. From this point I looked back, and through the trunks of the tree-ferns I could see fields and pavilions and the pyramidal roofs of massive edifices, and broad, verdant slopes, while in the distance there were peeps of the boundless sea. We continued on our way without stopping, and passed several successive terraces like the first, with the same caverns on the upper side and massive edifices on the lower, until at last the ascent ended at the fifth terrace, and here we turned to the left. Now the view became more

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varied. The tree-ferns arose on either side, arching overhead; on my right were the portals that opened into caverns, on my left solid and massive houses, built of great blocks of stone, with pyramidal roofs. As far as I could judge, I was in a city built on the slope of a mountain, with its streets formed thus of successive terraces and their connecting cross-ways, one half its habitations consisting of caverns, while the other half were pavilions and massive stone structures. Few people, however, were to be seen. Occasionally I saw one or two groping along with their eyes half shut, seeking the darkest shadows; and it seemed to me that this extraordinary race of men had some natural and universal peculiarity of eyesight which made them shun the sunlight, and seek the darkness of caves and of dense, overshadowing foliage.

At length we came to a place where the terrace ran back till it formed a semicircle against the mountain slope, when several vast portals appeared. Here there was a large space, where the tree-ferns grew in long lines crossing each other, and making a denser shade than usual. On the lower side were several stone edifices of immense size; and in the middle of the place there arose a singular structure, shaped like a half pyramid, with three sides sloping, and the fourth perpendicular, flat on the top, which was approached by a flight of steps. We now went on until we reached the central portal of the range of caverns, and here we stopped. The chief got out and beckoned to me. I followed. He then led the way into the cavern, while I, full of wonder, walked behind him.

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CHAPTER VII.

SCIENTIFIC THEORIES AND SCEPTICISM.

Thus far Melick had been reading the manuscript, but at this point he was interrupted by the announcement that dinner was ready. Upon this he stopped abruptly; for on board the *Falcon* dinner was the great event of the day, and in its presence even the manuscript had to be laid aside. Before long they were all seated around the dining-table in the sumptuous cabin, prepared to discuss the repast which had been served up by the genius of the French *chef* whom Lord Featherstone had brought with him.

Let us pause here for a moment to take a minuter survey of these four friends. In the first place, there was Lord Featherstone himself, young, handsome, languid, good-natured to a fault, with plenty of muscle if he chose to exert it, and plenty of brain if he chose to make use of it — a man who had become weary of the monotony of high life, and, like many of his order, was fond of seeking relief from the *ennui* of prosperity amid the excitements of the sea. Next to him was Dr. Congreve, a middle-aged man, with iron-gray hair, short beard and mustache, short nose, gray eyes, with spectacles, and stoutish body. Next came Noel Oxenden, late of Trinity College, Cambridge, a college friend of Featherstone's—a tall man, with a refined and intellectual face and reserved manner. Finally, there was Otto Melick, a *littèrateur* from London, about thirty years of age, with a wiry and muscular

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frame, and the restless manner of one who lives in a perpetual fidget.

For some time nothing was said; they partook of the repast in silence; but at length it became evident that they were thinking of the mysterious manuscript. Featherstone was the first to speak.

"A deuced queer sort of thing this, too," said he, "this manuscript. I can't quite make it out. Who ever dreamed of people living at the South Pole—and in a warm climate, too? Then it seems deuced odd, too, that we should pick up this copper cylinder with the manuscript. I hardly know what to think about it."

Melick smiled. "Why, it isn't much to see through," said he.

"See through what?" said the doctor, hastily, pricking up his ears at this, and peering keenly at Melick through his spectacles.

"Why, the manuscript, of course."

"Well," said the doctor, "what is it that you see? What do you make out of it?"

"Why, any one can see," said Melick, "that it's a transparent hoax, that's all. You don't mean to say, I hope, that you really regard it in any other light?"

"A transparent hoax!" repeated the doctor. "Will you please state why you regard it in that light?"

"Certainly," said Melick. "Some fellow wanted to get up a sensation novel and introduce it to the world with a great flourish of trumpets, and so he has taken this way of going about it. You see, he has counted on its being picked up, and perhaps published. After this he would come forward and own the authorship."

"And what good would that do?" asked the doctor, mildly. "He couldn't prove the authorship, and he couldn't get the copyright."

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"Oh, of course not; but he would gain notoriety, and that would give him a great sale for his next effort."

The doctor smiled. "See here, Melick," said he, "you've a very vivid imagination, my dear fellow; but come, let us discuss this for a little while in a common-sense way. Now, how long should you suppose that this manuscript has been afloat?"

"Oh, a few months or so," said Melick.

"A few months!" said the doctor. "A few years, you mean. Why, man, there are successive layers of barnacles on that copper cylinder which show a submersion of at least three years, perhaps more."

"By Jove! yes," remarked Featherstone. "Your sensation novelist must have been a lunatic if he chose that way of publishing a book."

"Then, again," continued the doctor, "how did it get here?"

"Oh, easily enough," answered Melick. "The ocean currents brought it."

"The ocean currents!" repeated the doctor. "That's a very vague expression. What do you mean? Of course it has been brought here by the ocean currents."

"Why, if it were thrown off the coast of England it would be carried away, in the ordinary course of things, and might make the tour of the world."

"The ocean currents," said the doctor, "have undoubtedly brought this to us. Of that I shall have more to say presently; but just now, in reference to your notion of a sensation novelist, and an English origin, let me ask your opinion of the material on which it is written. Did you ever see anything like it before? Is it paper?"

"No," said Melick; "it is evidently some vegetable substance. No doubt the writer has had it prepared for this very purpose, so as to make it look natural."

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"Do you know what it is?" asked the doctor.

"No."

"Then I'll tell you; it's papyrus."

"Papyrus?"

"Yes, actual papyrus. You can find but little of that in existence at the present day. It is only to be found here and there in museums. I know it perfectly well, however, and saw what it was at the first glance. Now, I hold that a sensation novelist would never have thought of papyrus. If he didn't wish to use paper, he could have found a dozen other things. I don't see how he could have found any one able to prepare such a substance as this for writing. It must have come from a country where it is actually in use. Now, mark you, the papyrus-plant may still be found growing wild on the banks of the upper Nile, and also in Sicily, and it is made use of for ropes and other things of that sort. But as to making writing material out of it, that is hardly possible, for the art is lost. The ancient process was very elaborate, and this manuscript is written on leaves which resemble in a marvellous manner those of the Egyptian papyrus books. There are two rolls at Marseilles which I have seen and examined, and they are identical with this. Now these papyrus leaves indicate much mechanical skill, and have a professional look. They seem like the work of an experienced manufacturer."

"I don't see," said Melick, obstinately, "why one shouldn't get papyrus now and have it made up into writing material."

"Oh, that's out of the question," said the doctor. "How could it ever enter into any one's head? How could your mere sensation-monger procure the raw material? That of itself would be a work of immense difficulty. How could he get it made up? That would

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be impossible. But, apart from this, just consider the strong internal evidence that there is as to the authenticity of the manuscript. Now, in the first place, there is the description of Desolation Island, which is perfectly accurate. But it is on his narrative beyond this that I lay chief stress. I can prove that the statements here are corroborated by those of Captain Ross in his account of that great voyage from which he returned not very long ago."

The doctor, who had been talking with much enthusiasm, paused here to take breath, and then went on:

"I happen to know all about that voyage, for I read a full report of it just before we started, and you can see for yourselves whether this manuscript is credible or not.

"Captain James Clarke Ross was sent forth on his expedition in 1839. On January 1, 1841, he passed the antarctic circle in 178° east longitude. On the 11th he discovered land in 70° 41′ south latitude, 172° 36′ east longitude. He found that the land was a continuous coast, trending southward, and rising to peaks of ten thousand feet in height, all covered with ice and snow. On the 12th he landed and took possession in the name of the queen. After this he continued his course as far as 78° 4′ south latitude, tracing a coast-line of six hundred miles. Observe, now, how all this coincides with More's narrative. Well, I now come to the crowning statement. In 77° 32′ south latitude, 167° east longitude, he came in sight of two enormous volcanoes over twelve thousand feet in height. One of these was in an active state of eruption. To this he gave the name of Mount Erebus. The other was quiet; it was of somewhat less height, and he gave it the name of Mount Terror. Mark, now, how wonderfully this resembles More's account. Well, just here his progress was arrested by a barrier which presented a perpendicular wall of over a

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hundred and fifty feet in height, along which he coasted for some distance. On the following year he penetrated six miles farther south, namely, 78° 11′ south latitude, 161° 27′ west longitude. At this point he was again stopped by the impassable cliffs, which arose here like an eternal barrier, while beyond them he saw a long line of lofty mountains covered with ice and snow."

"Did you hear the result of the American expedition?" asked Melick.

"Yes," replied the doctor. "Wilkes pretends to have found a continent, but his account of it makes it quite evident to my mind that he saw nothing but ice. I believe that Wilkes's antarctic continent will some day be penetrated by ships, which will sail for hundreds of miles farther south. All that is wanted is a favorable season. But mark the coincidence between Ross's report and More's manuscript. This must have been written at least three years ago, and the writer could not have known anything about Ross's discoveries. Above all, he could not have thought of those two volcanoes unless he had seen them."

"But these volcanoes mentioned by More are not the Erebus and Terror, are they?" said Lord Featherstone.

"Of course not; they are on the other side of the world."

"The whole story," said Melick, "may have been written by one of Ross's men and thrown overboard. If I'd been on that expedition I should probably have written it to beguile the time."

"Oh, yes," said the doctor; "and you would also have manufactured the papyrus and the copper cylinder on board to beguile the time."

"I dare say the writer picked up that papyrus and the copper cylinder in China or Japan, and made use of it in this way."

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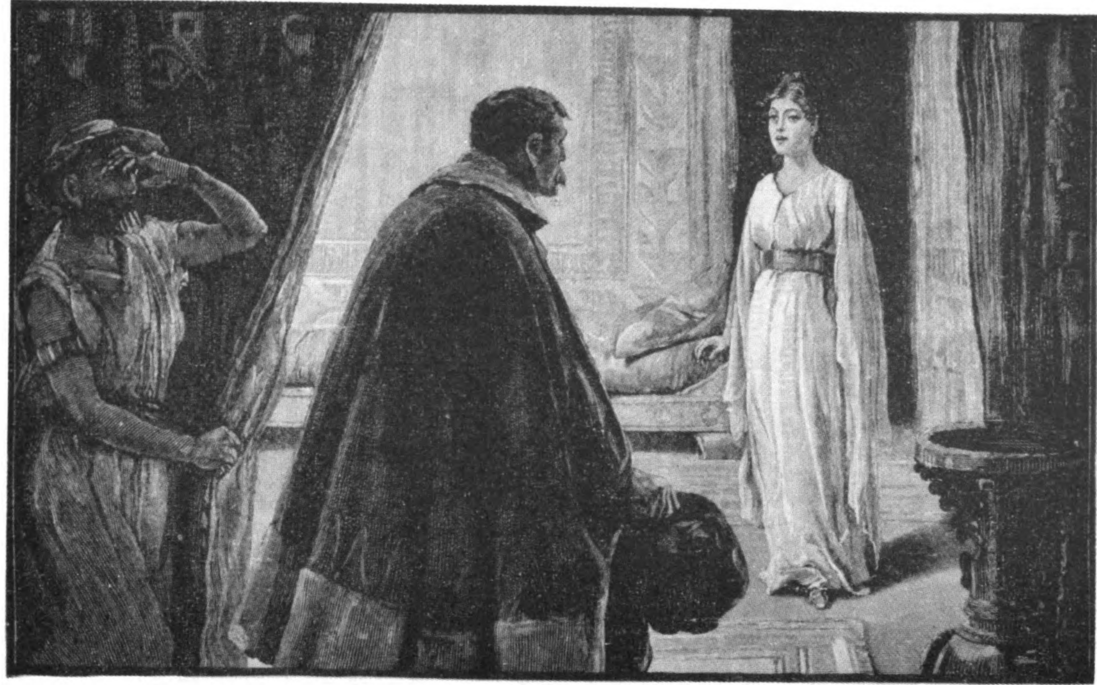

"HER FACE AND FORM, BUT ESPECIALLY HER EYES, SHOWED HER TO BE OF QUITE A DIFFERENT RACE FROM THESE OTHERS."

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"Where do you make out the position of More's volcanoes?" asked Featherstone.

"It is difficult to make it out accurately," said the doctor. "More gives no data. In fact he had none to give. He couldn't take any observations."

"The fact is," said Melick, "it's not a sailor's yarn at all. No sailor would ever express himself in that way. That's what struck me from the first. It has the ring of a confounded sensation-monger all through."

The doctor elevated his eyebrows, but took no notice of this.

"You see," he continued, addressing himself to the others, "Desolation Island is in 50° south latitude and 70° east longitude. As I make it out, More's course led him over about ten degrees of longitude in a southwest course. That course depended altogether upon the ocean currents. Now there is a great antarctic drift-current, which flows round the Cape of Good Hope and divides there, one half flowing past the east coast of Africa and the other setting across the Indian Ocean. Then it unites with a current which flows round the south of Van Dieman's Land, which also divides, and the southernmost current is supposed to cross the Pacific until it strikes Cape Horn, around which it flows, dividing as before. Now my theory is, that south of Desolation Island — I don't know how far — there is a great current setting towards the South Pole, and running southwest through degrees of longitude 60°, 50°, 40°, 30°, 20°, 10°, east of Greenwich; and finally sweeping on, it would reach More's volcanoes at a point which I should judge to be about 80° south latitude and 10° west longitude. There it passes between the volcanoes and bursts through the vast mountain barrier by a subterranean way, which has been formed for it in past ages by some primeval convulsion of nature. After

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this it probably sweeps around the great South Polar ocean, and emerges at the opposite side, not far from the volcanoes Erebus and Terror."

Here the doctor paused, and looked around with some self-complacency.

"Oh," said Melick, "if you take that tone, you have us all at your mercy. I know no more about the geography of the antarctic circle than I do of the moon. I simply criticise from a literary point of view, and I don't like his underground cavern with the stream running through it. It sounds like one of the voyages of Sindbad the Sailor. Nor do I like his description; he evidently is writing for effect. Besides, his style is vicious; it is too stilted. Finally, he has recourse to the stale device of a sea-serpent."

"A sea-serpent!" repeated the doctor. "Well, for my part, I feel by no means inclined to sneer at a sea-serpent. Its existence cannot be proved, yet it cannot be pooh-poohed. Every schoolboy knows that the waters of the sea were once filled with monsters more tremendous than the greatest sea-serpent that has ever been imagined. The plesiosaurus, with its snakelike head, if it existed now, would be called a sea-serpent. Some of these so-called fossil animals may have their representatives still living in the remoter parts of the world. Think of the recently discovered ornithorhynchus of Australia!"

"If you please, I'd really much rather not," said Melick, with a gesture of despair. "I haven't the honor of the gentleman's acquaintance."

"Well, what do you think of his notice of the sun, and the long light, and his low position on the horizon?"

"Oh, that's all right," said Melick. "Any one who chose to get up this thing would of course read up about the polar day, and all that. Every one knows that at

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the poles there is a six-months day, followed by a six-months night."

"You are a determined sceptic," said the doctor.

"How is it about the polar day?" asked Featherstone.

"Well," said the doctor, "at the poles themselves there is one day of six months, during which the sun never sets, and one night of six months, during which he never rises. In the spaces between the polar circles the quantities of the continuous day and continuous night vary in accordance with the distance from the pole. At the north point of Nova Zembla, 75° north latitude, there is uninterrupted light from May 1 to August 12, and uninterrupted darkness from November 8 to February 9. At the arctic circle at the summer solstice the day is twenty-four hours long. At the antarctic circle at the same time the night is twenty-four hours long."

Upon this Melick filled the doctor's wine-glass, with a great deal of ceremony.

"After all those statistics," he said, "you must feel rather dry. You should take a drink before venturing any further."

The doctor made no reply, but raised the glass to his lips and swallowed the wine in an abstracted way.

"The thing that struck me most," said Oxenden, "in all that has been read thus far, is the flatness of the South Pole, and the peculiar effect which this produces on the landscape."

"I must say," added Melick, "that the writer has got hold of a very good idea there, and has taken care to put it forward in a very prominent fashion."

"What is the difference," asked Oxenden, "between the two diameters of the earth, the polar and the equatorial? Is it known?"

"By Jove!" said Featherstone, "that's the very ques-

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tion I was going to ask. I've always heard that the earth is flattened at the poles, but never knew how much. Is there any way by which people can find out?"

The doctor drew a long breath, and beamed upon the company with a benevolent smile.

"Oh, yes," said he; "I can answer that question, if you care to know, and won't feel bored."

"Answer it, then, my dear fellow, by all means," said Featherstone, in his most languid tone.

"There are two ways," said the doctor, "by which the polar compression of the earth has been found out. One is by the measurement of arcs on the earth's surface; the other is by experiments with pendulums or weights with regard to the earth's gravity at different places. The former of these methods is, perhaps, the more satisfactory. Measurements of arcs have been made on a very extensive scale in different parts of the world—in England, France, Lapland, Peru, and India. Mr. Ivory, who devoted himself for years to an exhaustive examination of the subject, has deduced that the equatorial radius of the earth is over 3962 miles, and the polar radius over 3949 miles. This makes the depression at either pole upward of thirteen miles. A depression of over thirteen miles, as you must plainly see, should produce strange results in the scenery at the poles. Of course, if there are mountains, no difference would be noticed between this and any other part of the earth's surface; but if there is water, why, we ought to expect some such state of things as More describes. The gravitation test has also been tried, with very nearly the same result. The surface of the earth at the equator being farthest from the centre of gravity, indicates the least weight in bodies; but at the poles, where the surface is nearest the centre of gravity, there must be the greatest weight. It is found, in fact, that

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the weight of bodies increases in passing from the equator to the poles. By experiments made in this way the polar compression is ascertained to be the same as I have mentioned."

"What effect would this have on the climate at the poles?" asked Oxenden.

"That's a complicated question," said the doctor. "In answer to that we must leave ascertained facts and trust to theories, unless, indeed, we accept as valid the statements of this remarkable manuscript. For my own part, I see no reason why it should not be as More says. Remember, this polar world is thirteen miles nearer to the centre of the earth. Whether this should affect the climate or not, depends upon the nature of the earth's interior. That interior, according to the popular theory of the present day, is a mass of fire. This theory affirms that the earth was once a red-hot mass, which has cooled down; but the cooling process has only taken place on the surface, leaving the interior still a molten mass of matter in a state of intense heat and combustion. At the poles the surface is thus thirteen miles nearer to these tremendous fires. Of course it may be supposed that the earth's crust is of about equal thickness on all parts; yet still, even if this be so, thirteen miles ought to make some difference. Now at the North Pole there seem to be causes at work to counterbalance the effect of the internal heat, chiefly in the enormous accumulation of polar ice which probably hems it in on every side; and though many believe in an open polar sea of warm water at the North Pole, yet still the effect of vast ice-masses and of cold submarine currents must be to render the climate severe. But at the South Pole it is different. The observations of Ross and of More show us that there is a chain of mountains of immense height, which seem to encircle the pole. If this be so,

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and I see no reason to disbelieve it, then the ice of the outer seas must be kept away altogether from that strange inner sea of which More speaks. Ross saw the volcanoes Erebus and Terror; More saw two others. How many more there may be it is impossible to say; but all this shows that the effect of the earth's internal fires is very manifest in that region, and More has penetrated to a secluded world, which lies apart by itself, free from the influence of ice-masses, left to feel the effect of the internal fires, and possessing what is virtually a tropical climate."

"Well," said Melick, "there is no theory, however wild and fantastic, which some man of science will not be ready to support and to fortify by endless arguments, all of the most plausible kind. For my own part, I still believe More and his south polar world to be no more authentic than Sindbad the Sailor."

But the others evidently sympathized with the doctor's view, and regarded Melick as carrying his scepticism to an absurd excess.

"How large do you suppose this south polar ocean to be?" asked Featherstone.

"It is impossible to answer that question exactly," said the doctor. "It may be, as More hints, a thousand miles in extent, or only five hundred, or two hundred. For my own part, however, I feel like taking More's statements at their utmost value; and the idea that I have gathered from his narrative is that of a vast sea like the Mediterranean, surrounded by impassable mountains; by great and fertile countries, peopled with an immense variety of animals, with a fauna and flora quite unlike those of the rest of the world; and, above all, with great nations possessing a rare and unique civilization, and belonging to a race altogether different from any of the known races of men."

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"Well," said Melick, "that at least is the idea which the writer of the manuscript tries to convey."

By this time they had finished dinner.

"And now," said Featherstone, "let's have some more of the manuscript. Melick is tired of it, I dare say. I would relieve him, but I'm an infernally bad reader. Doctor, what do you say? Will you read the next instalment!"

"With all my heart," said the doctor, briskly.

"Very well, then," said Featherstone; "we will all be your attentive hearers."

And now the doctor took up the manuscript and began to read.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAVE-DWELLERS.

The cavern into which the chief led me was very spacious, but had no light except that which entered through the portal. It was with difficulty that I could see anything, but I found that there were many people here moving about, all as intent upon their own pursuits as those which one encounters in the streets of our cities. As we went on farther the darkness increased, until at last I lost sight of the chief altogether, and he had to come back and lead me. After going a little farther we came to a long, broad passage-way like a subterranean street, about twenty feet in width, and as many in height. Here there were discernible a few twinkling lamps, which served to make the darkness less intense and enabled me to see the shadowy figures around. These were numerous, and all seemed busy, though what their occupation might be I could not guess. I was amazed at the extent of these caverns, and at the multitude of the people. I saw also that from the nature of their eyes the sunlight distressed them, and in this cavern gloom they found their most congenial dwelling-place. From what I had thus far seen, this extraordinary people shrank from the sunlight; and when they had to move abroad they passed over roads which were darkened as much as possible by the deep shadows of mighty ferns, while for the most part they remained in dark caverns, in which they lived and moved and had their being. It was a puzzle to me

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whether the weakness of their eyes had caused this dislike of light, or the habit of cave-dwelling had caused this weakness of eyes. Here, in this darkness, where there was but a faint twinkle from the feeble lamps, their eyes seemed to serve them as well as mine did in the outer light of day; and the chief, who outside had moved with an uncertain step, and had blinked painfully at objects with his eyes almost closed, now appeared to be in his proper element; and while I hesitated like a blind man and groped along with a faltering step, he guided me, and seemed to see everything with perfect vision.

At length we stopped, and the chief raised up a thick, heavy mat which hung like an unwieldy curtain in front of a doorway. This the chief lifted. At once a blaze of light burst forth, gleaming into the dark, and appearing to blind him. His eyes closed. He held up the veil for me to pass through. I did so. He followed, and then groped his way slowly along, while I accompanied and assisted him.

I now found myself in a large grotto with an arched roof, from which was suspended an enormous lamp, either golden or gilded. All around were numerous lamps. The walls were adorned with rich hangings; couches were here, with soft cushions, and divans and ottomans; soft mats were on the floor, and everything gave indications of luxury and wealth. Other doors, covered with overhanging mats, seemed to lead out of this grotto. To one of these the chief walked, and raising the mat he led the way into another grotto like the last, with the same bright lights and the same adornments, but of smaller size. Here I saw some one who at once took up all my attention.

It was a young maiden. Her face and form, but especially her eyes, showed her to be of quite a different

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race from these others. To me she was of medium height, yet she was taller than any of the people here that I had hitherto seen. Her complexion was much lighter; her hair was dark, luxuriant, and wavy, and arranged in a coiffure secured with a golden band. Her features were of a different cast from those of the people here, for they were regular in outline and of exquisite beauty; her nose was straight; she had a short upper lip, arched eyebrows finely pencilled, thin lips, and well-rounded chin. But the chief contrast was in her eyes. These were large, dark, liquid, with long lashes, and with a splendid glow in their lustrous depths. She stood looking at me with her face full of amazement; and as I caught the gaze of her glorious eyes I rejoiced that I had at last found one who lived in the light and loved it—one who did not blink like a bat, but looked me full in the face, and allowed me to see all her soul revealed. The chief, who still was pained by the glare of light, kept his eyes covered, and said a few hasty words to the maiden. After this he hurried away, leaving me there.

The maiden stood for a moment looking at me. As the chief spoke to her a change came over her face. She looked at me in silence, with an expression of sad and mournful interest, which seemed to increase every moment. At length she approached and said something in the same strange language which the chief had used. I shook my head and replied in English, whereupon she shook her head with a look of perplexity. Then, anxious to conciliate her, I held out my hand. She looked at it in some surprise. Upon this I took her hand, and pressed it to my lips, feeling, however, somewhat doubtful as to the way in which she might receive such an advance. To my great delight she accepted it in a friendly spirit, and seemed to consider it my for-

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eign fashion of showing friendship and respect. She smiled and nodded, and pointed to my gun, which thus far I had carried in my hand. I smiled and laid it down. Then she pointed to a seat. I sat down, and then she seated herself close by me, and we looked at each other in mutual wonder and mutual inquiry.

I was full of amazement at thus meeting with so exquisite a being, and lost myself in conjectures as to her race, her office, and her position here. Who was she, or what? She was unlike the others, and reminded me of those Oriental beauties whose portraits I had seen in annuals and illustrated books. Her costume was in keeping with such a character. She wore a long tunic that reached from the neck to the ground, secured at the waist with a golden girdle; the sleeves were long and loose; over this she had a long mantle; on her feet were light slippers, white and glistening. All about her, in her room and in her costume, spoke of light and splendor and luxury. To these others who shrank so from the light she could not be related in any way. The respect with which she was treated by the chief, the peculiar splendor of her apartments, seemed to indicate some high rank. Was she, then, the queen of the land? Was she a princess? I could not tell. At any rate, whatever she was, she seemed anxious to show me the utmost attention. Her manner was full of dignity and sweet graciousness, and she appeared particularly anxious to make herself understood. At first she spoke in a language that sounded like that of the chief, and was full of gutturals and broad vowels; afterwards she spoke in another that was far more euphonious. I, on the other hand, spoke in English and in French; but of course I was as unintelligible to her as she was to me.

Language was, therefore, of no use. It was necessary

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to go back to first principles and make use of signs, or try to gain the most elementary words of her language; so first of all I pointed to her, and tried to indicate that I wanted to know her name. She caught my meaning at once, and, pointing to herself, she looked fixedly at me and said,

"Almah, Almah!"

I repeated these words after her, saying, "Almah, Almah!" She smiled and nodded, and then pointed to me with a look of inquiry that plainly asked for my name. I said "Adam More." She repeated this, and it sounded like "A-tam-or." But as she spoke this slowly her smile died away. She looked anxious and troubled, and once more that expression of wondering sadness came over her face. She repeated my name over and over in this way with a mournful intonation that thrilled through me, and excited forebodings of evil. "Atamor, Atamor!" And always after that she called me "Atamor."

But now she sat for some time, looking at me with a face full of pity and distress. At this I was greatly astonished; for but a moment before she had been full of smiles, and it was as though something in my name had excited sorrowful thoughts. Yet how could that be, since she could never by any possibility have heard my name before? The beautiful Almah seemed to be not altogether happy, or why should she be so quick to sadness? There was a mystery about all this which was quite unaccountable.

It was a singular situation, and one which excited within me feelings of unutterable delight. This light and splendor, this warmth and peace—what a contrast it offered to the scenes through which I had but lately passed! Those scenes of horror, of ice and snow, of storm and tempest, of cold and hunger, of riven cliff

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and furious ocean stream, and, above all, that crowning agony in the bleak iron-land of the cannibals—from all these I had escaped. I had been drawn down under the earth to experience the terrors of that unspeakable passage, and had at last emerged to light and life, to joy and hope. In this grotto I had found the culmination of all happiness. It was like a fairy realm; and here was one whose very look was enough to inspire the most despairing soul with hope and peace and happiness. The only thing that was now left to trouble me was this mournful face of Almah. Why did she look at me with such sad interest and such melancholy meaning? Did she know of any evil fate in store for me? Yet how could there be any evil fate to be feared from people who had received me with such unparalleled generosity? No, it could not be; so I resolved to try to bring back again the smile that had faded out of her face.

I pointed to her, and said "Almah."

She said "Atam-or."

And the smile did not come back, but the sadness remained in her face.

My eager desire now was to learn her language, and I resolved at once to acquire as many words and phrases as possible. I began by asking the names of things, such as "seat," "table," "mat," "coat," "hat," "shoe," "lamp," "floor," "wall," and all the common objects around. She gave all the names, and soon became so deeply interested that her sadness departed, and the smile came back once more. For my own part, I was always rather quick at learning languages. I had a correct ear and a retentive memory; in my wanderings round the world I had picked up a smattering of many languages, such as French, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, German, Hindostanee, and a few others. The words which

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I learned from Almah had a remote resemblance to Arabic; and, in fact, my knowledge of Arabic was actually of some assistance, though how it was that these people should have a language with that resemblance was certainly a mystery, and I did not try to solve it. The beautiful Almah soon grew immensely interested in my efforts to learn, and also in the English words which I gave when I pointed to any object.

Thus I pointed to myself, and said "Man," then pointing to her, I said, "Woman." She laughed, and pointing to me said "Iz," and pointing to herself said "Izza." Then I pointed to the row of lights, and said "Light;" she did the same, and said "Or." Then her face grew mournful, and she pointed to me, saying "Atam-or." It struck me then that there was some chance resemblance between "or," the word meaning "light," and one of the syllables of my name as she pronounced it, and that this might cause her sadness; but as I could make out nothing of this, I dismissed the thought, and went on with my questions. This took up the time, until at length some one appeared who looked like a servant. He said something, whereupon Almah arose and beckoned to me to follow. I did so, and we went to a neighboring apartment, where there was spread a bounteous repast. Here we sat and ate, and Almah told me the names of all the dishes. After dinner we returned to the room.

It was a singular and a delightful position. I was left alone with the beautiful Almah, who herself showed the utmost graciousness and the kindest interest in me. I could not understand it, nor did I try to; it was enough that I had such a happy lot. For hours we thus were together, and I learned many words. To insure remembrance, I wrote them down in my memorandum-book with a pencil, and both of these were regarded by

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Almah with the greatest curiosity. She felt the paper, inspected it, touched it with her tongue, and seemed to admire it greatly; but the pencil excited still greater admiration. I signed to her to write in the book. She did so, but the characters were quite unlike anything that I had ever seen. They were not joined like our writing and like Arabic letters, but were separate like our printed type, and were formed in an irregular manner. She then showed me a book made of a strange substance. It was filled with characters like those which she had just written. The leaves were not at all like paper, but seemed like some vegetable product, such as the leaves of a plant or the bark of a tree. They were very thin, very smooth, all cut into regular size, and fastened together by means of rings. This manuscript is written upon the same material. I afterwards found that it was universally used here, and was made of a reed that grows in marshes.

Here in these vast caverns there was no way by which I could tell the progress of time, but Almah had her own way of finding out when the hours of wakeful life were over. She arose and said "Salonla." This I afterwards found out to be the common salutation of the country. I said it after her. She then left me. Shortly afterwards a servant appeared, who took me to a room, which I understood to be mine. Here I found everything that I could wish, either for comfort or luxury; and as I felt fatigue, I flung myself upon the soft bed of down, and soon was sound asleep.

I slept for a long time. When I awoke I heard sounds in the distance, and knew that people were moving. Here in these caverns there was no difference between day and night, but, by modes of which I was ignorant, a regular succession was observed of waking times and sleeping times.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE CAVERN OF THE DEAD.

On going forth into the outer grotto I saw the table spread with a sumptuous repast, and the apartment in a blaze of light. Almah was not here; and though some servants made signs for me to eat, yet I could not until I should see whether she was coming or not. I had to wait for a long time, however; and while I was waiting the chief entered, shading his eyes with his hand from the painful light. He bowed low with the most profound courtesy, saying "Salonla," to which I responded in the same way. He seemed much pleased at this, and made a few remarks, which I did not understand; whereupon, anxious to lose no time in learning the language, I repeated to him all the words I knew, and asked after others. I pointed to him and asked his name. He said "Kohen." This, however, I afterwards found was not a name, but a title. The "Kohen" did not remain long, for the light was painful. After his departure I was alone for some time, and at length Almah made her appearance. I sprang to meet her, full of joy, and took her hand in both of mine and pressed it warmly. She smiled, and appeared quite free from the melancholy of the previous day.

We ate our breakfast together, after which we went out into the world of light, groping our way along through the dark passages amid the busy crowd. Almah could see better than I in the darkness; but she was far from seeing well, and did not move with that

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easy step and perfect certainty which all the others showed. Like me, she was a child of light, and the darkness was distressing to her. As we went on we were seen by all, but were apparently not considered prisoners. On the contrary, all looked at us with the deepest respect, and bowed low or moved aside, and occasionally made little offerings of fruit or flowers to one or the other of us. It seemed to me that we were treated with equal distinction; and if Almah was their queen, I, their guest, was regarded with equal honor. Whatever her rank might be, however, she was to all appearance the most absolute mistress of her own actions, and moved about among all these people with the independence and dignity of some person of exalted rank.

At length we emerged into the open air. Here the contrast to the cavern gloom inside gave to the outer world unusual brightness and splendor, so that even under the heavy overarching tree-ferns, which had seemed so dark when I was here before, it now appeared light and cheerful. Almah turned to the right, and we walked along the terrace. But few people were visible. They shrank from the light, and kept themselves in the caverns. Then after a few steps we came to the base of a tall half-pyramid, the summit of which was above the tops of the trees. I pointed to this, as though I wished to go up. Almah hesitated for a moment, and seemed to shrink back, but at length, overcoming her reluctance, began the ascent. A flight of stone steps led up. On reaching the top, I found it about thirty feet long by fifteen wide, with a high stone table in the middle. At that moment, however, I scarce noticed the pyramid summit, and I only describe it now because I was fated before long to see it with different feelings. What I then noticed was the vast and wondrous display of all the glories of nature that burst at once upon my

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view. There was that same boundless sea, rising up high towards the horizon, as I had seen it before, and suggesting infinite extent. There were the blue waters breaking into foam, the ships traversing the deep, the far-encircling shores green in vegetation, the high rampart of ice-bound mountains that shut in the land, making it a world by itself. There was the sun, low on the horizon, which it traversed on its long orbit, lighting up all these scenes till the six-months day should end and the six-months night begin.

For a long time I stood feasting my eyes upon all this splendor, and at length turned to see whether Almah shared my feelings. One look was enough. She stood absorbed in the scene, as though she were drinking in deep draughts of all this matchless beauty. I felt amazed at this ; I saw how different she seemed from the others, and could not account for it. But as yet I knew too little of the language to question her, and could only hope for a future explanation when I had learned more.

We descended at length and walked along the terrace and up and down the side streets. All were the same as I had noticed before—terraced streets, with caverns on one side and massive stone structures on the other. I saw deep channels, which were used as drains to carry down mountain torrents. I did not see all at this first walk, but I inspected the whole city in many subsequent walks until its outlines were all familiar. I found it about a mile long and about half a mile wide, constructed in a series of terraces, which rose one above another in a hollow of the mountains round a harbor of the sea. On my walks I met with but few people on the streets, and they all seemed troubled with the light. I saw also occasionally some more of those great birds, the name of which I learned from Almah; it was "opkuk."

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For some time my life went on most delightfully. I found myself surrounded with every comfort and luxury. Almah was my constant associate, and all around regarded us with the profoundest respect. The people were the mildest, most gentle, and most generous that I had ever seen. The Kohen seemed to pass most of his time in making new contrivances for my happiness. This strange people, in their dealings with me and with one another, seemed animated by a universal desire to do kindly acts; and the only possible objection against them was their singular love of darkness.

My freedom was absolute. No one watched me. Almah and I could go where we chose. So far as I could perceive, we were quite at liberty, if we wished, to take a boat and escape over the sea. It seemed also quite likely that if we had ordered out a galley and a gang of oarsmen, we should have been supplied with all that we might want in the most cheerful manner. Such a thought, however, was absurd. Why should I think of flying?

I had long ago lost all idea of time; and here, where it was for the present perpetual day, I was more at a loss than ever. I supposed that it was somewhere in the month of March, but whether at the beginning or the end I could not tell. The people had a regular system of wake-time and sleep-time, by which they ordered their lives; but whether these respective times were longer or shorter than the days and nights at home I could not tell at that time, though I afterwards learned all about it. On the whole, I was perfectly content—nay, more, perfectly happy; more so, indeed, than ever in my life, and quite willing to forget home and friends and everything in the society of Almah. While in her company there was always one purpose upon which I was most intent, and that was to master the language.

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I made rapid progress, and while she was absent I sought out others, especially the Kohen, with whom to practise. The Kohen was always most eager to aid me in every conceivable way or to any conceivable thing; and he had such a gentle manner and showed such generous qualities that I soon learned to regard him with positive affection.

Almah was always absent for several hours after I rose in the morning, and when she made her appearance it was with the face and manner of one who had returned from some unpleasant task. It always took some time for her to regain that cheerfulness which she usually showed. I soon felt a deep curiosity to learn the nature of her employment and office here, and as my knowledge of the language increased I began to question her. My first attempts were vain. She looked at me with indescribable mournfulness and shook her head. This, however, only confirmed me in my suspicions that her duties, whatever they might be, were of a painful nature; so I urged her to tell me, and asked her as well as I could if I might not share them or help her in some way. To all this, however, she only returned sighs and mournful looks for an answer. It seemed to me, from her manner and from the general behavior of the people, that there was no express prohibition on my learning anything, doing anything, or going anywhere; and so, after this, I besought her to let me accompany her some time. But this too she refused. My requests were often made, and as I learned more and more of the language I was able to make them with more earnestness and effect, until at length I succeeded in overcoming her objections.

"It is for your own sake," said she, "that I have refused, Atam-or. I do not wish to lessen your happiness. But you must know all soon; and so, if you wish to

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come with me and see what I have to do, why, you may come the next *jom*."

This meant the next day, *jom* being the division of time corresponding with our day. At this promise I was so full of gratitude that I forgot all about the dark suggestiveness of her words. The next *jom* I arose sooner than usual and went forth. I found Almah waiting for me. She looked troubled, and greeted me with a mournful smile.

"You will find pain in this," said she; "but you wish it, and if you still wish it, why, I will take you with me."

At this I only persisted the more, and so we set forth. We went through the cavern passages. Few people were there; all seemed asleep. Then we went out-of-doors and came into the full blaze of that day which here knew no night, but prolonged itself into months. For a while Almah stood looking forth between the trees to where the bright sunlight sparkled on the sea, and then with a sigh she turned to the left. I followed. On coming to the next portal she went in. I followed, and found myself in a rough cavern, dark and forbidding. Traversing this we came to an inner doorway, closed with a heavy mat. This she raised, and passed through, while I went in after her.

I found myself in a vast cavern, full of dim, sparkling lights, which served not to illuminate it, but merely to indicate its enormous extent. Far above rose the vaulted roof, to a height of apparently a hundred feet. Under this there was a lofty half-pyramid with stone steps. All around, as far as I could see in the obscure light, there were niches in the walls, each one containing a figure with a light burning at its feet. I took them for statues. Almah pointed in silence to one of these which was nearest, and I went up close so as to see it.

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The first glance that I took made me recoil with horror. It was no statue that I saw in that niche, but a shrivelled human form—a hideous sight. It was dark and dried; it was fixed in a sitting posture, with its hands resting on its knees, and its hollow eyes looking forward. On its head was the mockery of a wreath of flowers, while from its heart there projected the handle and half of the blade of a knife which had been thrust there. What was the meaning of this knife? It seemed to tell of a violent death. Yet the flowers must surely be a mark of honor. A violent death with honor, and the embalmed remains—these things suggested nothing else than the horrid thought of a human sacrifice. I looked away with eager and terrible curiosity. I saw all the niches, hundreds upon hundreds, all filled with these fearful occupants. I turned again with a sinking heart to Almah. Her face was full of anguish.

"This is my duty," said she. "Every *jom* I must come here and crown these victims with fresh flowers."

A feeling of sickening horror overwhelmed me. Almah had spoken these words and stood looking at me with a face of woe. This, then, was that daily task from which she was wont to return in such sadness—an abhorrent task to her, and one to which familiarity had never reconciled her. What was she doing here? What dark fate was it that thus bound this child of light to these children of darkness? or why was she thus compelled to perform a service from which all her nature revolted? I read in her face at this moment a horror equal to my own; and at the sight of her distress my own was lessened, and there arose within me a profound sympathy and a strong desire to do something to alleviate her misery.

"This is no place for you," continued Almah. "Go, and I will soon join you."

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"No," said I, using her language after my own broken fashion—"no, I will not go—I will stay, I will help, if you will permit."

She looked at me earnestly, and seemed to see that my resolution was firmly fixed, and that I was not to be dissuaded from it.

"Very well," said she; "if you do stay and help me, it will be a great relief."

With these simple words she proceeded to carry out her work. At the foot of the pyramid there was a heap of wreaths made out of fresh flowers, and these were to be placed by her on the heads of the embalmed corpses.

"This work," said she, "is considered here the highest and most honorable that can be performed. It is given to me out of kindness, and they cannot understand that I can have any other feelings in the performance than those of joy and exultation—here among the dead and in the dark."

I said nothing, but followed and watched her, carrying the wreaths and supplying her. She went to each niche in succession, and after taking the wreath off each corpse she placed a fresh one on, saying a brief formula at each act. By keeping her supplied with wreaths I was able to lighten her task, so much so that, whereas it usually occupied her more than two hours, on the present occasion it was finished in less than half an hour. She informed me that those which she crowned were the corpses of men who had been sacrificed during the present season—by season meaning the six months of light; and that though many more were here, yet they wore crowns of gold. At the end of ten years they were removed to public sepulchres. The number of those which had to be crowned by her was about a hundred. Her work was only to crown them,

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the labor of collecting the flowers and weaving the wreaths and attending to the lamps being performed by others.

I left this place with Almah, sad and depressed. She had not told me why these victims had been sacrificed, nor did I feel inclined to ask. A dark suspicion had come to me that these people, underneath all their amiable ways, concealed thoughts, habits, and motives of a frightful kind; and that beyond all my present brightness and happiness there might be a fate awaiting me too horrible for thought. Yet I did not wish to borrow trouble. What I had seen and heard was quite enough for one occasion. I was anxious, rather, to forget it all. Nor did Almah's words or manner in any way reassure me. She was silent and sad and preoccupied. It was as though she knew the worst, and knowing it, dared not speak; as though there was something more horrible which she dared not reveal. For my part, I feared it so that I dared not ask. It was enough for me just then to know that my mild and self-denying and generous entertainers were addicted to the abhorrent custom of human sacrifices.

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"SHE TOOK OFF THE OLD WREATH AND PUT ON A FRESH ONE."

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CHAPTER X.

THE SACRED HUNT.

On that very *jom* the Kohen informed me that they were about to set forth on the "sacred hunt," an event which always occurred towards the end of the season, and he kindly invited me to go. I, eager to find any relief from the horrible thoughts that had taken possession of me, and full of longing for active exertion, at once accepted the invitation. I was delighted to hear Almah say that she too was going; and I learned at the same time that in this strange land the women were as fond of hunting as the men, and that on such occasions their presence was expected.

The sacred hunt was certainly a strange one. I saw that it was to take place on the water; for a great crowd, numbering over a hundred, went down to the harbor and embarked on board a galley, on which there were a hundred others, who served as rowers. The hunters were all armed with long, light javelins and short swords. Some of these were offered to me, for as yet no one supposed that my rifle and pistol were instruments of destruction, or anything else than ornaments. My refusal to accept their weapons created some surprise, but with their usual civility they did not press their offers further. It was evident that this hunting expedition was only made in obedience to some hallowed custom; for the light of the sun pained their eyes, and all their movements were made with uncertainty and hesitation. With these a hunt by sunlight is the same

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as a hunt by night would be with us. There was the same confusion and awkwardness.

The Kohen was in command. At his word the galley started, and the rowers pulled out to sea with long, regular strokes. I was anxious to know what the expedition was aimed at, and what were the animals that we expected to get; but I could not make out Almah's explanations. Her words suggested something of vague terror, vast proportions, and indescribable ferocity; but my ignorance of the language prevented me from learning anything more.

We went along the coast for a few miles, and then came to the mouth of a great river, which seemed to flow from among the mountains. The current was exceedingly swift, and as I looked back it seemed to me that it must be the very stream which had borne me here into this remote world. I afterwards found out that this was so—that this stream emerges from among the mountains, flowing from an unknown source. It was over this that I had been borne in my sleep, after I had emerged from the subterranean darkness, and it was by this current that I had been carried into the open sea. As we crossed the estuary of this river I saw that the shores on either side were low, and covered with the rankest vegetation; giant trees of fern, vast reeds and grasses, all arose here in a dense growth impassable to man. Upon the shallow shores the surf was breaking; and here in the tide I saw objects which I at first supposed to be rocks, but afterwards found out to be living things. They looked like alligators, but were far larger than the largest alligators known to us, besides being of far more terrific aspect. Towards these the galley was directed, and I now saw with surprise that these were the objects of the sacred hunt.

Suddenly, as the galley was moving along at half-

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speed, there arose out of the water a thing that looked like the folds of a giant hairy serpent, which, however, proved to be the long neck of an incredible monster, whose immense body soon afterwards appeared above the water. With huge fins he propelled himself towards us; and his head, twenty feet in the air, was poised as though about to attack. The head was like that of an alligator, the open jaws showed a fearful array of sharp teeth, the eyes were fiercely glowing, the long neck was covered with a coarse, shaggy mane, while the top of the body, which was out of the water, was incased in an impenetrable cuirass of bone. Such a monster as this seemed unassailable, especially by men who had no missile weapons, and whose eyes were so dim and weak. I therefore expected that the galley would turn and fly from the attack, for the monster itself seemed as large as our vessel; but there was not the slightest thought of flight. On the contrary, every man was on the alert; some sprang to the bow and stood there, awaiting the first shock; others, amidship, stood waiting for the orders of the Kohen. Meanwhile the monster approached, and at length, with a sweep of his long neck, came down upon the dense crowd at the bows. A dozen frail lances were broken against his horny head, a half dozen wretches were seized and terribly torn by those remorseless jaws. Still none fled. All rushed forward, and with lances, axes, knives, and ropes they sought to destroy the enemy. Numbers of them strove to seize his long neck. In the ardor of the fight the rowers dropped their oars and hurried to the scene, to take part in the struggle. The slaughter was sickening, but not a man quailed. Never had I dreamed of such blind and desperate courage as was now displayed before my horror-stricken eyes. Each sought to outdo the other. They had managed to throw ropes around the monster's

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neck, by which he was held close to the galley. His fierce movements seemed likely to drag us all down under the water; and his long neck, free from restraint, writhed and twisted among the struggling crowd of fighting men, in the midst of whom was the Kohen, as desperate and as fearless as any.

All this had taken place in a very short space of time, and I had scarce been able to comprehend the full meaning of it all. As for Almah, she stood pale and trembling, with a face of horror. At last it seemed to me that every man of them would be destroyed, and that they were all throwing their lives away to no purpose whatever. Above all, my heart was wrung for the Kohen, who was there in the midst of his people, lifting his frail and puny arm against the monster. I could endure inaction no longer. I had brought my arms with me, as usual; and now, as the monster raised his head, I took aim at his eye and fired. The report rang out in thunder. Almah gave a shriek, and amid the smoke I saw the long, snakelike neck of the monster sweeping about madly among the men. In the water his vast tail was lashing the surface of the sea, and churning it into foam. Here I once more took aim immediately under the fore-fin, where there was no scaly covering. Once more I fired. This time it was with fatal effect; for after one or two convulsive movements the monster, with a low, deep bellow, let his head fall and gasped out his life.

I hurried forward. There lay the frightful head, with its long neck and shaggy mane, while all around was a hideous spectacle. The destruction of life had been awful. Nineteen were dead, and twenty-eight were wounded, writhing in every gradation of agony, some horribly mangled. The rest stood staring at me in astonishment, not understanding those peals of thunder that

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had laid the monster low. There was no terror or awe, however—nothing more than surprise; and the Kohen, whose clothes were torn into shreds and covered with blood, looked at me in bewilderment. I said to him, out of my small stock of words, that the wounded ought at once to be cared for. At this he turned away and made some remarks to his men.

I now stood ready to lend my own services, if needful. I expected to take a part in the tender attentions which were the due of these gallant souls, who had exhibited such matchless valor; these men who thought nothing of life, but flung it away at the command of their chief without dreaming of flight or of hesitation. Thus I stood looking on in an expectant attitude, when there came a moment in which I was simply petrified with horror; for the Kohen drew his knife, stooped over the wounded man nearest him, and then stabbed him to the heart with a mortal wound. The others all proceeded to do the same, and they did it in the coolest and most business-like manner, without any passion, without any feeling of any kind, and, indeed, with a certain air of gratification, as though they were performing some peculiarly high and sacred duty. The mildness and benevolence of their faces seemed actually heightened, and the perpetration of this unutterable atrocity seemed to affect these people in the same way in which the performance of acts of humanity might affect us.

For my own part, I stood for a few moments actually motionless from perplexity and horror; then, with a shriek, I rushed forward as if to prevent it; but I was too late. The unutterable deed was done, and the unfortunate wounded, without an exception, lay dead beside their slain companions. As for myself, I was only regarded with fresh wonder, and they all stood blinking at me with their half-closed eyes. Suddenly the

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Kohen fell prostrate on his knees before me, and bowing his head handed me his bloody knife.

"Atam-or," said he, "give me also the blessing of darkness and death!"

At these strange words, following such actions, I could say nothing. I was more bewildered than ever, and horror and bewilderment made me dumb. I turned away and went aft to Almah, who had seen it all. She looked at me with an anxious gaze, as if to learn what the effect of all this had been on me. I could not speak a word, but with a vague sense of the necessity of self-preservation, I loaded my rifle, and tried in vain to make out what might be the meaning of this union of gentleness and kindness with atrocious cruelty. Meanwhile, the men all went to work upon various tasks. Some secured lines about the monster so as to tow it astern; others busied themselves with the corpses, collecting them and arranging them in rows. At length we returned, towing the monster astern.

I could not speak until I was back again in the lighted rooms and alone with Almah; then I told her, as well as I could, the horror that I felt.

"It was honor to those brave men," said she.

"Honor!" said I. "What! to kill them?"

"Yes," said she, "it is so with these people; with them death is the highest blessing. They all love death and seek after it. To die for another is immortal glory. To kill the wounded, was to show that they had died for others. The wounded wished it themselves. You saw how they all sought after death. These people were too generous and kind-hearted to refuse to kill them after they had received wounds."

At this my perplexity grew deeper than ever, for such an explanation as this only served to make the mystery greater.

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"Here," said she, "no one understands what it is to fear death. They all love it and long for it; but every one wishes above all to die for others. This is their highest blessing. To die a natural death in bed is avoided if possible."

All this was incomprehensible.

"Tell me, Almah," I said—"you hate darkness as I do—do you not fear death?"

"I fear it above all things," said Almah. "To me it is the horror of life; it is the chief of terrors."

"So it is with me," said I. "In my country we call death the King of Terrors."

"Here," said Almah, "they call death the Lord of Joy."

Not long after, the Kohen came in, looking as quiet, as gentle, and as amiable as ever. He showed some curiosity about my rifle, which he called a *sepet-ram*, or "rod of thunder." Almah also showed curiosity. I did not care to explain the process of loading it to the Kohen, though Almah had seen me load it in the galley, and I left him to suppose that it was used in some mysterious way. I cautioned him not to handle it carelessly, but found that this caution only made him the more eager to handle it, since the prospect of an accident found an irresistible attraction. I would not let it go out of my own hands, however; and the Kohen, whose self-denial was always most wonderful to me, at once checked his curiosity.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE SWAMP MONSTER.

A FEW *joms* after, I was informed by the Kohen that there was to be another sacred hunt. At first I felt inclined to refuse, but on learning that Almah was going, I resolved to go also; for Almah, though generally mistress of her actions, had nevertheless certain duties to perform, and among these was the necessity of accompanying hunting-parties. I did not yet understand her position here, nor had I heard from her yet how it was that she was so different from the rest of them. That was all to be learned at a future time. For the present I had to be satisfied with knowing that she belonged to a different nation, who spoke a different language, and that all her thoughts and feelings were totally different from those of the people among whom she was living. She loved the light, she feared death, and she had never been able in the slightest degree to reconcile herself to the habits of these people. This I could readily understand, for to me it seemed as though they lived in opposition to nature itself.

We went out into the daylight, and then I saw a sight which filled me with amazement. I saw a flock of birds larger than even the opkuks. They were called "opmahera." They seemed as tall as giraffes, and their long legs indicated great powers of running. Their wings were very short, and not adapted for flight. They were very tractable, and were harnessed for riding in a peculiar way; lines like reins were fastened to the wings,

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and the driver, who sat close by the neck, guided the bird in this way. Each bird carried two men, but for Almah and me there was a bird apiece. An iron prod was also taken by each driver as a spur. I did not find out until afterwards how to drive. At that time the prospect of so novel a ride was such an exciting one that I forgot everything else. The birds seemed quiet and docile. I took it for granted that mine was well trained, and would go with the others of his own accord. We all mounted by means of a stone platform which stood by the pyramid, and soon were on our way.

The speed was amazing; the fastest race-horse at home is slow compared with this. It was as swift as an ordinary railway train, if not more so. For some minutes the novelty of my situation took away all other thoughts, and I held the reins in my hands without knowing how to use them. But this mattered not, for the well-trained bird kept on after the others, while Almah on her bird was close behind me. The pace, as I said, was tremendous, yet no easier motion can be imagined. The bird bounded along with immense leaps, with wings outstretched, but its feet touched the ground so lightly that the motion seemed almost equal to flying. We did not confine ourselves to the roads, for the birds were capable of going over any kind of a country in a straight line. On this occasion we passed over wide fields and rocky mountain ridges and deep swamps and sand wastes at the same speed, until at length we reached a vast forest of dense tree-ferns, where the whole band stopped for a short time, after which we took up a new direction, moving on more slowly. The forest grew up out of a swamp, which extended as far as the eye could reach from the sea to the mountains. Along the edge of this forest we went for some time, until at length there came a rushing, crackling sound, as

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of something moving there among the trees, crushing down everything in its progress. We halted, and did not have to wait long; for soon, not far away, there emerged from the thick forest a figure of incredible size and most hideous aspect.

It looked like one of those fabled dragons such as may be seen in pictures, but without wings. It was nearly a hundred feet in length, with a stout body and a long tail, covered all over with impenetrable scales. Its hind-legs were rather longer than its fore-legs, and it moved its huge body with ease and rapidity. Its feet were armed with formidable claws. But its head was most terrific. It was a vast mass of bone, with enormous eyes that glared like fire; its jaws opened to the width of six or eight feet, and were furnished with rows of sharp teeth, while at the extremity of its nose there was a tusk several feet long, like the horn of a rhinoceros, curving backward. All this I took in at the first glance, and the next instant the whole band of hunters, with their usual recklessness, flung themselves upon the monster.

For a short time all was the wildest confusion—an intermingling of birds and men, with the writhing and roaring beast. With his huge claws and his curved horn and his wide jaws he dealt death and destruction all around; yet still the assailants kept at their work. Many leaped down to the ground and rushed close up to the monster, thrusting their lances into the softer and more unprotected parts of his body; while others, guiding their birds with marvellous dexterity, assailed him on all sides. The birds, too, were kept well to their work; nor did they exhibit any fear. It was not until they were wounded that they sought to fly. Still, the contest seemed too unequal. The sacrifice of life was horrible. I saw men and birds literally torn to pieces before my eyes. Nevertheless, the utter fearlessness of

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the assailants confounded me. In spite of the slaughter, fresh crowds rushed on. They clambered over his back, and strove to drive their lances under his bony cuirass. In the midst of them I saw the Kohen. By some means he had reached the animal's back, and was crawling along, holding by the coarse shaggy mane. At length he stopped, and with a sudden effort thrust his lance into the monster's eye. The vast beast gave a low and terrible howl; his immense tail went flying all about; in his pain he rolled over and over, crushing underneath him in his awful struggles all who were nearest. I could no longer be inactive. I raised my rifle, and as the beast in his writhings exposed his belly I took aim at the soft flesh just inside his left fore-leg, and fired both barrels.

At that instant my bird gave a wild, shrill scream and a vast bound into the air, and then away it went like the wind—away, I knew not where. That first bound had nearly jerked me off; but I managed to avoid this, and now instinctively clung with all my might to the bird's neck, still holding my rifle. The speed of the bird was twice as great as it had been before—as the speed of a runaway horse surpasses that of the same horse when trotting at his ordinary rate and under control. I could scarcely make out where I was going. Rocks, hills, swamps, fields, trees, sand, and sea all seemed to flash past in one confused assemblage, and the only thought in my mind was that I was being carried to some remote wilderness, to be flung there bruised and maimed among the rocks, to perish helplessly. Every moment I expected to be thrown, for the progress of the bird was not only inconceivably swift, but it also gave immense leaps into the air; and it was only its easy mode of lighting on the ground after each leap that saved me from being hurled off. As it was, how-

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ever, I clung instinctively to the bird's neck, until at last it came to a stop so suddenly that my hands slipped, and I fell to the ground.

I was senseless for I know not how long. When at last I revived I found myself propped up against a bank, and Almah bathing my head with cold water. Fortunately, I had received no hurt. In falling I had struck on my head, but it was against the soft turf, and though I was stunned, yet on regaining my senses no further inconvenience was experienced. The presence of Almah was soon explained. The report of the rifle had startled her bird also, which had bounded away in terror like mine; but Almah understood how to guide him, and managed to keep him after me, so as to be of assistance in case of need. She had been close behind all the time, and had stopped when I fell, and come to my assistance.

The place was a slope looking out upon an arm of the sea, and apparently remote from human abode. The scenery was exquisitely beautiful. A little distance off we saw the edge of the forest; the open country was dotted with clumps of trees; on the other side of the arm of the sea was an easy declivity covered with trees of luxuriant foliage and vast dimensions; farther away on one side rose the icy summits of impassable mountains; on the other side there extended the blue expanse of the boundless sea. The spot where I lay was overshadowed by the dense foliage of a tree which was unlike anything that I had ever seen, and seemed like some exaggerated grass; at our feet a brook ran murmuring to the shore; in the air and all around were innumerable birds.

The situation in which I found myself seemed inexpressibly sweet, and all the more so from the gentle face of Almah. Would it not be well, I thought, to remain here? Why should Almah go back to her repulsive du-

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ties? Why should we return to those children of blood, who loved death and darkness? Here we might pass our days together unmolested. The genial climate would afford us warmth; we needed no shelter except the trees, and as for food, there were the birds of the air in innumerable flocks.

I proposed this to her; she smiled sadly. "You forget," said she, "this season of light will not last much longer. In a few more *joms* the dark season will begin, and then we should perish in a place like this."

"Are there no caverns here?"

"Oh, no. This country has no inhabitants. It is full of fierce wild beasts. We should be destroyed before one *jom*."

"But must we go back?" said I. "You have a country. Where is it? See, here are these birds. They are swift. They can carry us anywhere. Come, let us fly, and you can return to your own country."

Almah shook her head. "These birds," said she, "cannot go over the sea, or through these endless forests. My country can only be reached by sea."

"Can we not hurry back, seize a boat, and go? I know how to sail over the water without oars."

"We certainly might leave the country; but there is another difficulty. The dark season is coming, and we should never be able to find our way. Besides, the sea is full of monsters, and you and I will perish."

"At any rate, let us try. I have my *sepet-ram*."

"We could never find our way."

"Only tell me," said I, "where it lies, and I will go by the stars."

"The trouble is," said she, "that even if we did succeed in reaching my land, I should be sent back again; for I was sent here as a sacred hostage, and I have been here four seasons."

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But in the midst of this conversation a sound arrested our attention—a heavy, puffing, snorting sound, as of some living thing. Hastily I started up, rifle in hand, and looked; and as I looked I felt my nerves thrill with horror. There, close by the shore, I saw a vast form—a living thing—full sixty feet in length. It had a body like that of an elephant, the head of a crocodile, and enormous glaring eyes. Its immense body was covered with impenetrable armor, and was supported on legs long enough to allow it to run with great speed. It differed in many respects from the monster of the swamp—the legs being longer, the tail shorter and thinner, and its head and jaws larger and longer. I shrank back, thinking of seizing Almah and hiding. But I saw that she had already taken the alarm, and with more presence of mind than I had she had hurried to the birds, who were standing near, and had made them lie down. As I turned, she beckoned to me without a word. I hurried to her. She told me to mount. I did so at once; she did the same. Scarce had we mounted than the monster perceived us, and with a terrible bellow came rushing towards us. Almah drove her goad deep into her bird, which at once rose and went off like the wind, and mine started to follow. The vast monster came on. His roar sounded close behind, and I heard the clash of his tremendous jaws; but the swift bird with a bound snatched me from his grasp, and bore me far away out of his reach. Away I went like the wind. Almah was ahead, looking back from time to time, and waving her hand joyously. So we went on, returning on our course at a speed almost as great as that with which we had come. By this time the novelty had in part worn away, and the easy motion gave me confidence. I noticed that we were travelling a wild, uninhabited, and rocky district by the sea-side. Before me the country

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spread far away, interspersed with groves, terminating in forests, and bounded in the far distance by mountains. The country here was so rough that it seemed as if nothing could pass over it except such creatures as these —the opmaheras.

At length we arrived at the spot which we had left—the scene of the hunt. We could see it from afar, for the opmaheras stood quietly around, and the men were busy elsewhere. As we drew nearer I saw the vast body of the monster. They had succeeded in killing it, yet—oh heavens, at what a cost! One half of all the party lay dead. The rest were unharmed, and among these was the Kohen. He greeted me with a melancholy smile. That melancholy smile, however, was not caused by the sad fate of his brave companions, but, as I afterwards learned, simply and solely because he himself had not gained his death. When I saw that there were no wounded, a dark suspicion came over me that the wounded had again been put to death. I did not care to ask. The truth was too terrible to hear, and I felt glad that accident had drawn me away. It was all a dark and dreadful mystery. These people were the most gentle, the most self-sacrificing, and the most generous in the world; yet their strange and unnatural love of death made them capable of endless atrocities. Life and light seemed to them as actual evils, and death and darkness the only things worthy of regard.

Almah told me that they were going to bring the monster home, and had sent for opkuks to drag it along. The dead were also to be fetched back. There was no further necessity for us to remain, and so we returned at once.

On the way, Almah said, "Do not use the *sepet-ram* again. You can do no good with it. You must not

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make it common. Keep it. The time may come when you will need it: you are not fond of death."

I shuddered.

"Never forget," she said, "that here death is considered the chief blessing. It is useless for you to interfere in their ways. You cannot change them."

Some more *joms* passed. The bodies were embalmed, and Almah had more victims to crown with garlands in the horrible *cheder nebilin.*

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CHAPTER XII.

THE BALEFUL SACRIFICE.

I RESOLVED to go on no more sacred hunts. I was sickened at the horrible cruelty, the needless slaughter, the mad self-sacrifice which distinguished them. I was overwhelmed with horror at the merciless destruction of brave comrades, whose wounds, so gallantly received, should have been enough to inspire pity even in a heart of stone. The gentleness, the incessant kindness, the matchless generosity of these people seemed all a mockery. What availed it all when the same hand that heaped favors upon me, the guest, could deal death without compunction upon friends and relatives? It seemed quite possible for the Kohen to kill his own child, or cut the throat of his wife, if the humor seized him. And how long could I hope to be spared among a people who had this insane thirst for blood?

Some more *joms* had passed, and the light season had almost ended. The sun had been sinking lower and lower. The time had at last come when only a portion of his disk would be visible for a little while above the hills, and then he would be seen no more for six months of our time. This was the dark season, and, as I had already learned, its advent was always hailed with joy and celebrated with solemn services, for the dark season freed them from their long confinement, permitted them to go abroad, to travel by sea and land, to carry on their great works, to indulge in all their most important labors and favorite amusements. The Kohen asked

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me to be present at the great festival, and I gladly consented. There seemed to be nothing in this that could be repellent. As I was anxious to witness some of their purely religious ceremonies, I wished to go. When I told Almah, she looked sad, but said nothing. I wondered at this, and asked her if she was going. She informed me that she would have to go, whereupon I assured her that this was an additional reason why I should go.

I went with Almah. The Kohen attended us with his usual kind and gracious consideration. It seemed almost as though he was our servant. He took us to a place where we could be seated, although all the others were standing. Almah wished to refuse, but I prevailed upon her to sit down, and she did so.

The scene was upon the semicircular terrace in front of the cavern, and we were seated upon a stone platform beside the chief portal. A vast crowd was gathered in front. Before us arose the half-pyramid of which I have already spoken. The light was faint. It came from the disk of the sun, which was partly visible over the icy crest of the distant mountains. Far away the sea was visible, rising high over the tops of the trees, while overhead the brighter stars were plainly discernible.

The Kohen ascended the pyramid, and others followed. At the base there was a crowd of men, with emaciated forms and faces, and coarse, squalid attire, who looked like the most abject paupers, and seemed the lowest in the land. As the Kohen reached the summit there arose a strange sound—a mournful, plaintive chant, which seemed to be sung chiefly by the paupers at the base of the pyramid. The words of this chant I could not make out, but the melancholy strain affected me in spite of myself. There was no particular tune, and nothing like harmony; but the effect of so many voices uniting in

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this strain was very powerful and altogether indescribable. In the midst of this I saw the crowd parting asunder so as to make way for something; and through the passage thus formed I saw a number of youths in long robes, who advanced to the pyramid, singing as they went. Then they ascended the steps, two by two, still singing, and at length reached the summit, where they arranged themselves in order. There were thirty of them, and they arranged themselves in three rows of ten each; and as they stood they never ceased to sing, while the paupers below joined in the strain.

And now the sun was almost hidden, and there was only the faintest line from the upper edge of his disk perceptible over the icy mountain-tops. The light was a softened twilight glow. It was to be the last sight of the sun for six months, and this was the spectacle upon which he threw his parting beam. So the sun passed away, and then there came the beginning of the long dark season. At first, however, there was rather twilight than darkness, and this twilight continued long. All this only served to heighten the effect of this striking scene; and as the light faded away, I looked with increasing curiosity upon the group at the top of the pyramid. Almah was silent. I half turned, and said something to her about the beauty of the view. She said nothing, but looked at me with such an expression that I was filled with amazement. I saw in her face something like a dreadful anticipation—something that spoke of coming evil. The feeling was communicated to me, and I turned my eyes back to the group on the pyramid with vague fears in my soul.

Those fears were but too well founded, for now the dread ceremony began. The Kohen drew his knife, and placed himself at the head of the stone table. One of the youths came forward, stepped upon it, and lay down

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on his back with his head towards the Kohen. The mournful chant still went on. Then the Kohen raised his knife and plunged it into the heart of the youth. I sat for a moment rooted to the spot; then a groan burst from me in spite of myself. Almah caught my hands in hers, which were as cold as ice.

"Be firm," she said, "or we are both lost. Be firm, Atam-or!"

"I must go," said I, and I tried to rise.

"Don't move," she said, "for your life! We are lost if you move. Keep still—restrain yourself—shut your eyes."

I tried to do so, but could not. There was a horrible fascination about the scene which forced me to look and see all. The Kohen took the victim, and drawing it from the altar, threw it over the precipice to the ground beneath. Then a loud shout burst forth from the great crowd.

"*Sibgu Sibgin! Ranenu! Hodu lecosck!*" which means, "Sacrifice the victims! Rejoice! Give thanks to darkness!"

Then another of the youths went forward amid the singing, and laid himself down to meet the same fate; and again the corpse was flung from the top of the pyramid, and again the shout arose. All the others came forward in the same manner.

Oh, horrible, horrible, thrice horrible spectacle! I do not remember how I endured it. I sat there with Almah, trying to restrain myself as she had entreated me, more for her sake than for my own, a prey to every feeling of horror, anguish, and despair. How it all ended I do not know, nor do I know how I got away from the place; for I only remember coming back to my senses in the lighted grotto, with Almah bending anxiously over me.

After this there remained a dark mystery and an ever-

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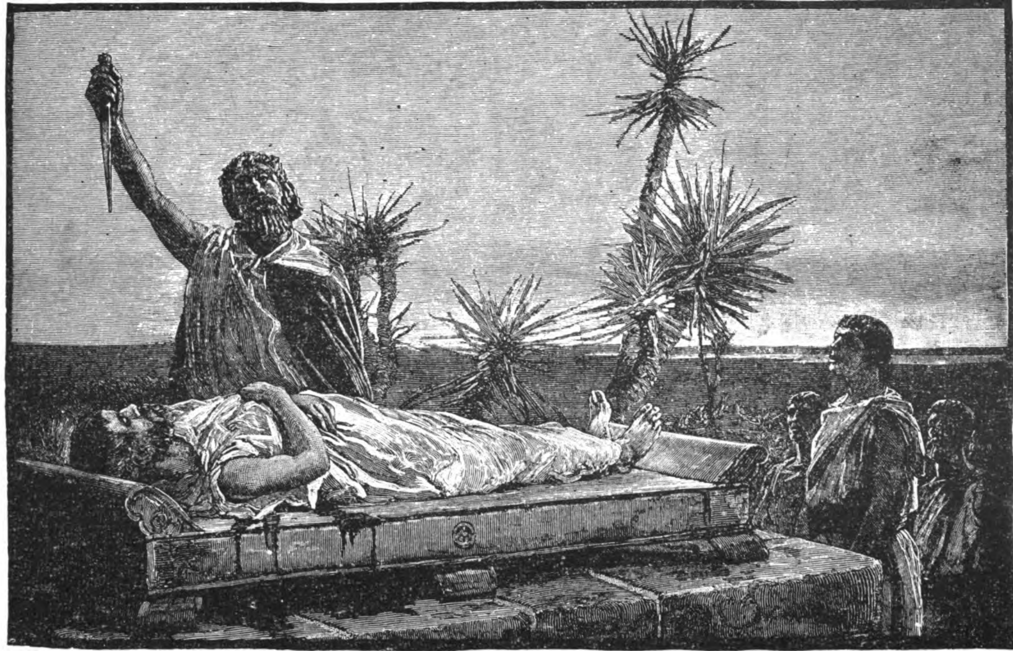

"THEN THE KOHEN RAISED HIS KNIFE AND PLUNGED IT INTO THE HEART OF THE YOUTH."

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present horror. I found myself among a people who were at once the gentlest of the human race and the most bloodthirsty—the kindest and the most cruel. This mild, amiable, and self-sacrificing Kohen, how was it possible that he should transform himself to a fiend incarnate? And for me and for Almah, what possible hope could there be? What fate might they have in reserve for us? Of what avail was all this profound respect, this incessant desire to please, this attention to our slightest wish, this comfort and luxury and splendor, this freedom of speech and action? Was it anything better than a mockery? Might it not be the shallow kindness of the priest to the victim reserved for the sacrifice? Was it, after all, in any degree better than the kindness of the cannibal savages on those drear outer shores who received us with such hospitality, but only that they might destroy us at last? Might they not all belong to the same race, dwelling as they did in caverns, shunning the sunlight, and blending kindness with cruelty? It was an awful thought!

Yet I had one consolation. Almah was with me, and so long as she was spared to me I could endure this life. I tried for her sake to resist the feelings that were coming over me. I saw that she too was a prey to ever-deepening sadness. She felt as I did, and this despair of soul might wreck her young life if there were no alleviation. And so I sought to alleviate her distress and to banish her sadness. The songs of these people had much impressed me; and one day, as I talked about this with Almah, she brought forth a musical instrument of peculiar shape, which was not unlike a guitar, though the shape was square and there were a dozen strings. Upon this she played, singing at the same time some songs of a plaintive character. An idea now occurred to me to have an instrument made according to my own

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plans, which should be nothing less than a violin. Almah was delighted at the proposal, and at once found a very clever workman, who under my direction succeeded in producing one which served my purpose well. I was a good violinist, and in this I was able to find solace for myself and for Almah for many a long hour.

The first time that I played was memorable. As the tones floated through the air they caught the ears of those outside, and soon great numbers came into the apartment, listening in amazement and in rapt attention. Even the painful light was disregarded in the pleasure of this most novel sensation, and I perceived that if the sense of sight was deficient among them, that of hearing was sufficiently acute. I played many times, and sometimes sang from among the songs of different nations; but those which these people liked best were the Irish and Scottish melodies—those matchless strains created by the genius of the Celtic race, and handed down from immemorial ages through long generations. In these there was nothing artificial, nothing transient. They were the utterance of the human heart, and in them there was that touch of nature which makes all men kin. These were the immortal passions which shall never cease to affect the soul of man, and which had power even here; the strains of love, of sadness, and of pathos were sweet and enticing to this gentle race; for in their mild manners and their outbursts of cruelty they seemed to be not unlike the very race which had created this music, since the Celt is at once gentle and bloodthirsty.

I played "Tara," "Bonnie Doon," "The Last Rose of Summer," "The Land of the Leal," "Auld Lang Syne," "Lochaber." They stood entranced, listening with all their souls. They seemed to hunger and thirst after this music, and the strains of the inspired Celtic race seemed to come to them like the revelation of the

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glory of heaven. Then I played more lively airs. Some I played a second time, singing the words. They seemed eager to have the same one played often. At last a grisly thought came to me: it was that they would learn these sweet strains, and put their own words to them so as to use them at the awful sacrifices. After that I would play no more.

It is a land of tender love and remorseless cruelty. Music is all-powerful to awaken the one, but powerless to abate the other; and the eyes that weep over the pathetic strains of "Lochaber" can gaze without a tear upon the death-agonies of a slaughtered friend.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE AWFUL "MISTA KOSEK."

THE terrible sacrifice marked the end of the light season. The dark season had now begun, which would last for half the coming year. No more sunlight would now be visible, save at first for a few *joms*, when at certain times the glare would be seen shooting up above the icy crests of the mountains. Now the people all moved out of the caverns into the stone houses on the opposite side of the terraces, and the busy throng transferred themselves and their occupations to the open air. This with them was the season of activity, when all their most important affairs were undertaken and carried out; the season, too, of enjoyment, when all the chief sports and festivals took place. Then the outer world all awoke to life; the streets were thronged, fleets of galleys came forth from their moorings, and the sounds of labor and of pleasure, of toil and revelry, arose into the darkened skies. Then the city was a city of the living, no longer silent, but full of bustle, and the caverns were frequented but little. This cavern life was only tolerable during the light season, when the sun-glare was over the land; but now, when the beneficent and grateful darkness pervaded all things, the outer world was infinitely more agreeable.

To me, however, the arrival of the dark season brought only additional gloom. I could not get rid of the thought that I was reserved for some horrible fate, in which Almah might also be involved. We were both aliens here,

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in a nation of kind-hearted and amiable miscreants—of generous, refined, and most self-denying fiends; of men who were highly civilized, yet utterly wrong-headed and irreclaimable in their bloodthirsty cruelty. The stain of blood-guiltiness was over all the land. What was I, that I could hope to be spared? The hope was madness, and I did not pretend to indulge it.

The only consolation was Almah. The manners of these people were such that we were still left as unconstrained as ever in our movements, and always, wherever we went, we encountered nothing but amiable smiles and courteous offices. Every one was always eager to do anything for us—to give, to go, to act, to speak, as though we were the most honored of guests, the pride of the city. The Kohen was untiring in his efforts to please. He was in the habit of making presents every time he came to see me, and on each occasion the present was of a different kind; at one time it was a new robe of curiously wrought feathers, at another some beautiful gem, at another some rare fruit. He also made incessant efforts to render my situation pleasant, and was delighted at my rapid progress in acquiring the language.

On the *jom* following the sacrifice I accompanied Almah as she went to her daily task, and after it was over I asked when the new victims would be placed here. "How long does it take to embalm them?" I added.

Almah looked at me earnestly.

"They will not bring them here; they will not embalm them," said she.

"Why not?" I asked; "what will they do with them?"

"Do not ask," said she. "It will pain you to know."

In spite of repeated solicitation she refused to give me any satisfaction. I felt deeply moved at her words

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and her looks. What was it, I wondered, that could give me pain? or what could there still be that could excite fear in me, who had learned and seen so much? I could not imagine. It was evidently some disposal of the bodies of the victims—that was plain. Turning this over in my mind, with vague conjectures as to Almah's meaning, I left her and walked along the terrace until I came to the next cavern. This had never been open before, and I now entered through curiosity to see what it might be. I saw a vast cavern, quite as large as the *cheder nebilin*, full of people, who seemed to be engaged in decorating it. Hundreds were at work, and they had brought immense tree-ferns, which were placed on either side in long rows, with their branches meeting and interlacing at the top. It looked like the interior of some great Gothic cathedral at night, and the few twinkling lights that were scattered here and there made the shadowy outline just visible to me.

I asked one of the bystanders what this might be, and he told me that it was the *Mista Kosek*, which means the "Feast of Darkness," from which I gathered that they were about to celebrate the advent of the dark season with a feast. From what I knew of their character this seemed quite intelligible, and there was much beauty and taste in the arrangements. All were industrious and orderly, and each one seemed most eager to assist his neighbor. Indeed, there seemed to be a friendly rivalry in this which at times amounted to positive violence; for more than once when a man was seen carrying too large a burden, some one else would insist on taking it from him. At first these altercations seemed exactly like the quarrels of workmen at home, but a closer inspection showed that it was merely the persistent effort of one to help another.

I learned that the feast was to take place as soon as

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the hall was decorated, and that it would be attended by a great multitude. I felt a great interest in it. There seemed something of poetic beauty in this mode of welcoming the advent of a welcome season, and it served to mitigate the horrible remembrance of that other celebration, upon which I could not think without a shudder. I thought that it would be pleasant to join with them here, and resolved to ask Almah to come with me, so that she might explain the meaning of the ceremonies. Full of this thought, I went to her and told her my wish. She looked at me with a face full of amazement and misery. In great surprise I questioned her eagerly.

"Ask me nothing," said she. "I will answer nothing; but do not think of it. Do not go near it. Stay in your room till the fearful repast is over."

"Fearful? How is it fearful?" I asked.

"Everything here is fearful," said Almah, with a sigh. "Every season it grows worse, and I shall grow at length to hate life and love death as these people do. They can never understand us, and we can never understand them. Oh, if I could but once more stand in my own dear native land but for one moment—to see once more the scenes and the faces that I love so well! Oh, how different is this land from mine! Here all is dark, all is terrible. There the people love the light and rejoice in the glorious sun, and when the dark season comes they wait, and have no other desire than for the long day. There we live under the sky, in the eye of the sun. We build our houses, and when the dark season comes we fill them with lamps that make a blaze like the sun itself."

"We must try to escape," I said, in a low voice.

"Escape!" said she. "That is easy enough. We might go now; but where?"

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"Back," said I, "to your own country. See, the sky is dotted with stars: I can find my way by them."

"Yes," said she, "if I could only tell you where to go; but I cannot. My country lies somewhere over the sea, but where, I know not. Over the sea there are many lands, and we might reach some one even worse than this."

"Perhaps," said I, "the Kohen might allow us to go away to your country, and send us there. He is most generous and most amiable. He seems to spend most of his time in efforts to make us happy. There must be many seamen in this nation who know the way. It would be worth trying."

Almah shook her head. "You do not understand these people," said she. "Their ruling passion is the hatred of self, and therefore they are eager to confer benefits on others. The only hope of life that I have for you and for myself is in this, that if they kill us they will lose their most agreeable occupation. They value us most highly, because we take everything that is given us. You and I now possess as our own property all this city and all its buildings, and all the people have made themselves our slaves."

At this I was utterly bewildered.

"I don't understand," said I.

"I suppose not," said Almah; "but you will understand better after you have been here longer. At any rate, you can see for yourself that the ruling passion here is self-denial and the good of others. Every one is intent upon this, from the Kohen up to the most squalid pauper."

"*Up* to the most squalid pauper?" said I. "I do not understand you. You mean *down* to the most squalid pauper."

"No," said Almah; "I mean what I say. In this

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country the paupers form the most honored and envied class."

"This is beyond my comprehension," said I. "But if this is really so, and if these people pretend to be our slaves, why may we not order out a galley and go?"

"Oh, well, with you in your land, if a master were to order his slaves to cut his throat and poison his children and burn down his house, would the slaves obey?"

"Certainly not."

"Well, our slaves here would not—in fact could not—obey a command that would be shocking to their natures. They think that we are in the best of all lands, and my request to be sent home would be utterly monstrous."

"I suppose," said I, "they would kill us if we asked them to do so?"

"Yes," said Almah; "for they think death the greatest blessing."

"And if at the point of death we should beg for life, would they spare us?"

"Certainly not," said Almah. "Would you kill a man who asked for death? No more would these people spare a man who asked for life."

All this was so utterly incomprehensible that I could pursue the subject no further. I saw, however, that Almah was wretched, dejected, and suffering greatly from homesickness. Gladly would I have taken her and started off on a desperate flight by sea or land—gladly would I have dared every peril, although I well knew what tremendous perils there were; but she would not consent, and believed the attempt to be useless. I could only wait, therefore, and indulge the hope that at last a chance of escape might one day come, of which she would be willing to avail herself.

Almah utterly refused to go to the feast, and entreated

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me not to go; but this only served to increase my curiosity, and I determined to see it for myself, whatever it was. She had seen it, and why should not I? Whatever it might be, my nerves could surely stand the shock as well as hers. Besides, I was anxious to know the very worst; and if there was anything that could surpass in atrocity what I had already witnessed, it were better that I should not remain in ignorance of it.

So at length, leaving Almah, I returned to the hall of the feast. I found there a vast multitude, which seemed to comprise the whole city—men, women, children, all were there. Long tables were laid out. The people were all standing and waiting. A choir was singing plaintive strains that sounded like the chant of the sacrifice. Those nearest me regarded me with their usual amiable smiles, and wished to conduct me to some place of honor; but I did not care about taking a part in this feast. I wished to be a mere spectator, nothing more.

I walked past and came to the next cavern. This seemed to be quite as large as the other. There was a crowd of people here also, and at one end there blazed an enormous fire. It was a furnace that seemed to be used for cooking the food of this banquet, and there was a thick steam rising from an immense caldron, while the air was filled with an odor like that of a kitchen.

All this I took in at a glance, and at the same instant I saw something else. There were several very long tables, which stood at the sides of the cavern and in the middle, and upon each of these I saw lying certain things covered over with cloths. The shape of these was more than suggestive—it told me all. It was a sight of horror—awful, tremendous, unspeakable! For a moment I stood motionless, staring; then all the cavern seemed to swim around me. I reeled, I fell, and sank into nothingness.

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"FOR A MOMENT I STOOD MOTIONLESS, STARING; THEN ALL THE CAVERN SEEMED TO SWIM AROUND ME."

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When I revived I was in the lighted grotto, lying on a couch, with Almah bending over me. Her face was full of tenderest anxiety, yet there was also apparent a certain solemn gloom that well accorded with my own feelings. As I looked at her she drew a long breath, and buried her face in her hands.

After a time my recollection returned, and all came back before me. I rose to a sitting posture.

"Do not rise yet," said Almah, anxiously; "you are weak."

"No," said I; "I am as strong as ever; but I'm afraid that you are weaker."

Almah shuddered.

"If you had told me exactly what it was," said I, "I would not have gone."

"I could not tell you," said she. "It is too terrible to name. Even the thought is intolerable. I told you not to go. Why did you go?"

She spoke in accents of tender reproach, and there were tears in her eyes.

"I did not think of anything so hideous as that," said I. "I thought that there might be a sacrifice, but nothing worse."

I now learned that when I fainted I had been raised most tenderly, and the Kohen himself came with me as I was carried back, and he thought that Almah would be my most agreeable nurse. The Kohen was most kind and sympathetic, and all the people vied with one another in their efforts to assist me—so much so that there was the greatest confusion. It was only by Almah's express entreaty that they retired and left me with her.

Here was a new phase in the character of this mysterious people. Could I ever hope to understand them? Where other people are cruel to strangers, or at best indifferent, these are eager in their acts of kindness;

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they exhibit the most unbounded hospitality, the most lavish generosity, the most self-denying care and attention; where others would be offended at the intrusion of a stranger, and enraged at his unconquerable disgust, these people had no feeling save pity, sympathy, and a desire to alleviate his distress. And yet—oh, and yet!—oh, thought of horror!—what was this that I had seen? The abhorrent savages in the outer wilderness were surely of the same race as these. They too received us kindly, they too lavished upon us their hospitality, and yet there followed the horror of that frightful repast. Here there had been kindness and generosity and affectionate attention, to be succeeded by deeds without a name. Ah me! what an hour that was! And yet it was as nothing compared to what lay before me in the future.

But the subject was one of which I dared not speak—one from which I had to force my thoughts away. I took the violin and played "Lochaber" till Almah wept, and I had to put it away. Then I begged her to play or sing. She brought an instrument like a lute, and upon this she played some melancholy strains.

At length the Kohen came in. His mild, benevolent face never exhibited more gentle and affectionate sympathy than now. He seated himself, and with eyes half closed, as usual, talked much; and yet, with a native delicacy which always distinguished this extraordinary man, he made no allusion to the awful *Mista Kosek.* For my own part, I could not speak. I was absent-minded, overwhelmed with gloom and despair, and at the same time full of aversion towards him and all his race. One question, however, I had to put.

"Who were the victims of the *Mista Kosek?*"

"They?" said he, with an agreeable smile. "Oh, they were the victims of the sacrifice."

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I sank back in my seat, and said no more. The Kohen then took Almah's lute, played and sang in a very sweet voice, and at length, with his usual gentle consideration, seeing that I looked weary, he retired.

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CHAPTER XIV.

I LEARN MY DOOM.

Horror is a feeling that cannot last long; human nature is incapable of supporting it. Sadness, whether from bereavement, or disappointment, or misfortune of any kind, may linger on through life. In my case, however, the milder and more enduring feeling of sadness had no sufficient cause for existence. The sights which I had seen inspired horror, and horror only. But when the first rush of this feeling had passed there came a reaction. Calmness followed, and then all the circumstances of my life here conspired to perpetuate that calm. For here all on the surface was pleasant and beautiful; all the people were amiable and courteous and most generous. I had light and luxury and amusements. Around me there were thousands of faces, all greeting me with cordial affection, and thousands of hands all ready to perform my slightest wish. Above all, there was Almah. Everything combined to make her most dear to me. My life had been such that I never before had seen any one whom I loved; and here Almah was the one congenial associate in a whole world of aliens: she was beautiful and gentle and sympathetic, and I loved her dearly, even before I understood what my feelings were. One day I learned all, and found that she was more precious to me than all the world.

It was one *jom* when she did not make her appearance as usual. On asking after her I learned that she was ill. At this intelligence there came over me a feel-

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ing of sickening anxiety and fear. Almah ill! What if it should prove serious? Could I endure life here without her sweet companionship? Of what value was life without her? And as I asked myself these questions I learned that Almah had become dearer to me than life itself, and that in her was all the sunshine of my existence. While she was absent, life was nothing; all its value, all its light, its flavor, its beauty, were gone. I felt utterly crushed. I forgot all else save her illness, and all that I had endured seemed as nothing when compared with this.

In the midst of my own anxiety I was surprised to find that the whole community was most profoundly agitated. Among all classes there seemed to be but one thought—her illness. I could overhear them talking. I could see them wait outside to hear about her. It seemed to be the one subject of interest, beside which all others were forgotten. The Kohen was absorbed in her case; all the physicians of the city were more or less engaged in her behalf; and there came forward as volunteers every woman in the place who had any knowledge of sick-duties. I was somewhat perplexed, however, at their manner. They were certainly agitated and intensely interested, yet not exactly sad. Indeed, from what I heard it seemed as though this strange people regarded sickness as rather a blessing than otherwise. This, however, did not interfere in the slightest degree with the most intense interest in her, and the most assiduous attention. The Kohen in particular was devoted to her. He was absent-minded, silent, and full of care. On the whole, I felt more than ever puzzled, and less able than ever to understand these people. I loved them, yet loathed them; for the Kohen I had at once affection and horror. He looked like an anxious father, full of tenderest love for a sick child—full also

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of delicate sympathy with me ; and yet I knew all the time that he was quite capable of plunging the sacrificial knife in Almah's heart and of eating her afterwards.

But my own thoughts were all of Almah. I learned how dear she was. With her the brightness of life had passed ; without her existence would be intolerable. Her sweet voice, her tender and gracious manner, her soft touch, her tender, affectionate smile, her mournful yet trustful look—oh, heavens ! would all these be mine no more ? I could not endure the thought. At first I wandered about, seeking rest and finding none ; and at length I sat in my own room, and passed the time in listening, in questioning the attendants, in wondering what I should do if she should be taken from me.

At length on one blessed *jom* the Kohen came to me with a bright smile.

"Our darling Almah is better," said he. "Eat, I beseech you. She is very dear to all of us, and we have all felt for her and for you. But now all danger is past. The physicians say that she will soon be well."

There were tears in his eyes as he spoke. It may have been caused by the bright light, but I attributed this to his loving heart, and I forgot that he was a cannibal. I took his hands in mine and pressed them in deep emotion. He looked at me with a sweet and gentle smile.

"I see it all," said he, in a low voice ; "you love her, Atam-or."

I pressed his hands harder, but said nothing. Indeed, I could not trust myself to speak.

"I knew it," said he; "it is but natural. You are both of a different race from us; you are both much alike, and in full sympathy with one another. This draws you together. When I first saw you I thought that you would be a fit companion for her here—that you would lessen her gloom, and that she would be pleas-

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ant to you. I found out soon that I was right, and I felt glad, for you at once showed the fullest sympathy with one another. Never till you came was Almah happy with us; but since you have come she has been a different being, and there has been a joyousness in her manner that I never saw before. You have made her forget how to weep ; and as for yourself, I hope she has made your life in this strange land seem less painful, Atam-or."

At all this I was so full of amazement that I could not say one word.

"Pardon me," continued he, "if I have said anything that may seem like an intrusion upon your secret and most sacred feelings. I could not have said it had it not been for the deep affection I feel for Almah and for you, and for the reason that I am just now more moved than usual, and have less control over my feelings."

Saying this, he pressed my hand and left me. It was not the custom here to shake hands, but with his usual amiability he had adopted my custom, and used it as naturally as though he had been to the manner born.

I was encouraged now. The mild Kohen came often to cheer me. He talked much about Almah—about her sweet and gracious disposition, the love that all felt for her, the deep and intense interest which her illness had aroused. In all this he seemed more like a man of my own race than before, and in his eager desire for her recovery he failed to exhibit that love for death which was his nature. So it seemed; yet this desire for her recovery did not arise out of any lack of love for death; its true cause I was to learn afterwards; and I was to know that if he desired Almah's recovery now, it was only that she might live long enough to encounter death in a more terrific form. But just then all this was unknown, and I judged him by myself.

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At last I learned that she was much better, and would be out on the following *jom*. This intelligence filled me with a fever of eager anticipation, so great that I could think of nothing else. Sleep was impossible. I could only wait, and try as best I might to quell my impatience. At last the time came. I sat waiting. The curtain was drawn aside. I sprang up, and, hurrying towards her, I caught her in my arms and wept for joy. Ah me, how pale she looked! She bore still the marks of her illness. She seemed deeply embarrassed and agitated at the fervor of my greeting; while I, instead of apologizing or trying to excuse myself, only grew more agitated still.

"Oh, Almah," I cried, "I should have died if you had not come back to me! Oh, Almah, I love you better than life, and I never knew how dearly I loved you till I thought that I had lost you! Oh, forgive me, but I must tell you—and don't weep, darling."

She was weeping as I spoke. She said nothing, but twined her arms around my neck and wept on my breast.

After this we had much to say that we had never mentioned before. I cannot tell the sweet words that she said to me; but I now learned that she had loved me from the first—when I came to her in her loneliness, when she was homesick and heartsick; and I came, a kindred nature, of a race more like her own; and she saw in me the only one of all around her whom it was possible not to detest, and therefore she loved me.

We had many things to say to one another, and long exchanges of confidence to make. She now for the first time told me all the sorrow that she had endured in her captivity—sorrow which she had kept silent and shut up deep within her breast. At first her life here had been so terrible that it had brought her down nearly to death. After this she had sunk into dull despair; she had grown familiar with horrors and lived in a state of unnatural

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"WE HAD MANY THINGS TO SAY TO ONE ANOTHER."

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calm. From this my arrival had roused her. The display of feeling on my part had brought back all her old self, and roused anew all those feelings which in her had become dormant. The darkness, the bloodshed, the sacrifices, all these affected me as they had once affected her. I had the same fear of death which she had. When I had gone with her to the *cheder nebilin,* when I had used my *sepet-ram* to save life, she had perceived in me feelings and impulses to which all her own nature responded. Finally, when I asked about the *Mista Kosek,* she warned me not to go. When I did go she was with me in thought and suffered all that I felt, until the moment when I was brought back and laid senseless at her feet.

"Then," said Almah, "I felt the full meaning of all that lies before us."

"What do you mean by that?" I asked, anxiously. "You speak as though there were something yet—worse than what has already been; yet nothing can possibly be worse. We have seen the worst; let us now try to shake off these grisly thoughts, and be happy with one another. Your strength will soon be back, and while we have one another we can be happy even in this gloom."

"Ah me," said Almah, "it would be better now to die. I could die happy now, since I know that you love me."

"Death!" said I; "do not talk of it—do not mention that word. It is more abhorrent than ever. No, Almah, let us live and love—let us hope—let us fly."

"Impossible!" said she, in a mournful voice. "We cannot fly. There is no hope. We must face the future, and make up our minds to bear our fate."

"Fate!" I repeated, looking at her in wonder and in deep concern. "What do you mean by our fate? Is

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there anything more which you know and which I have not heard?"

"You have heard nothing," said she, slowly; "and all that you have seen and heard is as nothing compared with what lies before us. For you and for me there is a fate—inconceivable, abhorrent, tremendous!—a fate of which I dare not speak or even think, and from which there is no escape whatever."

As Almah said this she looked at me with an expression in which terror and anguish were striving with love. Her cheeks, which shortly before had flushed rosy red in sweet confusion, were now pallid, her lips ashen; her eyes were full of a wild despair. I looked at her in wonder, and could not say a word.

"Oh, Atam-or," said she, "I am afraid of death!"

"Almah," said I, "why will you speak of death? What is this fate which you fear so much?"

"It is this," said she, hurriedly and with a shudder, "you and I are singled out. I have been reserved for years until one should be found who might be joined with me. You came. I saw it all at once. I have known it —dreaded it—tried to fight against it. But it was of no use. Oh, Atam-or, our love means death; for the very fact that you love me and I love you seals our doom!"

"Our doom? What doom?"

"The sacrifice!" exclaimed Almah, with another shudder. In her voice and look there was a terrible meaning, which I could not fail to take. I understood it now, and my blood curdled in my veins. Almah clung to me despairingly.

"Do not leave me!" she cried—"do not leave me! I have no one but you. The sacrifice, the sacrifice! It is our doom, the great sacrifice—at the end of the dark season. It is at the *amir*. We must go there to meet our doom."

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"The *amir?*" I asked; "what is that?"

"It is the metropolis," said she.

I was utterly overwhelmed, yet still I tried to console her; but the attempt was vain.

"Oh!" she cried, "you will not understand. The sacrifice is but a part—it is but the beginning. Death is terrible; yet it may be endured—if there is only death. But oh!—oh, think!—think of that which comes after—the *Mista Kosek!*"

Now the full meaning flashed upon me, and I saw it all. In an instant there arose in my mind the awful sacrifice on the pyramid and the unutterable horror of the *Mista Kosek*. Oh, horror, horror, horror! Oh, hideous abomination and deed without a name! I could not speak. I caught her in my arms, and we both wept passionately.

The happiness of our love was now darkened by this tremendous cloud that lowered before us. The shock of this discovery was overpowering, and some time elapsed before I could rally from it. Though Almah's love was sweet beyond expression, and though as the time passed I saw that every *jom* she regained more and more of her former health and strength, still I could not forget what had been revealed. We were happy with one another, yet our happiness was clouded, and amid the brightness of our love there was ever present the dread spectre of our appalling doom.

These feelings, however, grew fainter. Hope is ever ready to arise; and I began to think that these people, though given to evil ways, were after all kind-hearted, and might listen to entreaty. Above all, there was the Kohen, so benevolent, so self-denying, so amiable, so sympathetic. I could not forget all that he had said during Almah's illness, and it seemed more than probable that an appeal to his better nature might not be without effect. I said as much to Almah.

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"The Kohen," said she; "why, he can do nothing."

"Why not? He is the chief man here, and ought to have great influence."

"You don't understand," said she, with a sigh. "The Kohen is the lowest and least influential man in the city."

"Why, who are influential if he is not?" I asked.

"The paupers," said Almah.

"The paupers!" I exclaimed, in amazement.

"Yes," said Almah. "Here among these people the paupers form the most honored, influential, and envied portion of the community."

This was incomprehensible. Almah tried to explain, but to no purpose, and I determined to talk to the Kohen.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE KOHEN IS INEXORABLE.

I DETERMINED to talk to the Kohen, and try for myself whether he might not be accessible to pity. This greatest of cannibals might, indeed, have his little peculiarities, I thought—and who has not?—yet at bottom he seemed full of tender and benevolent feeling; and as he evidently spent his whole time in the endeavor to make us happy, it seemed not unlikely that he might do something for our happiness in a case where our very existence was at stake.

The Kohen listened with deep attention as I stated my case. I did this fully and frankly. I talked of my love for Almah and of Almah's love for me; our hope that we might be united so as to live happily in reciprocal affection; and I was going on to speak of the dread that was in my heart when he interrupted me:

"You speak of being united," said he. "You talk strangely. Of course you mean that you wish to be separated."

"Separated!" I exclaimed. "What do you mean? Of course we wish to be united."

The Kohen stared at me as I said this with the look of one who was quite puzzled; and I then went on to speak of the fate that was before us, and to entreat his sympathy and his aid that we might be saved from so hideous a doom. To all these words the Kohen listened with an air of amazement, as though I were saying incomprehensible things.

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"You have a gentle and an affectionate nature," I said—"a nature full of sympathy with others, and noble self-denial."

"Of course," said the Kohen, quickly, as though glad to get hold of something which he could understand, "of course we are all so, for we are so made. It is our nature. Who is there who is not self-denying? No one can help that."

This sounded strange indeed; but I did not care to criticise it. I came to my purpose direct and said,

"Save us from our fate."

"Your fate?"

"Yes, from death—that death of horror."

"Death—horror! What do you mean by horror?" said the Kohen, in an amazement that was sincere and unfeigned. I cannot comprehend your meaning. It seems as though you actually dislike death; but that is not conceivable. It cannot be possible that you fear death."

"Fear death!" I exclaimed, "I do—I do. Who is there that does not fear it?"

The Kohen stared.

"I do not understand you," he said.

"Do you not understand," said I, "that death is abhorrent to humanity."

"Abhorrent!" said the Kohen; "that is impossible. Is it not the highest blessing? Who is there that does not long for death? Death is the greatest blessing, the chief desire of man—the highest aim. And you—are you not to be envied in having your felicity so near? above all, in having such a death as that which is appointed for you—so noble, so sublime? You must be mad; your happiness has turned your head."

All this seemed like hideous mockery, and I stared at the Kohen with a gaze that probably strengthened his opinion of my madness.

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"Do you love death?" I asked at length, in amazement.

"Love death? What a question! Of course I love death—all men do; who does not? Is it not human nature? Do we not instinctively fly to meet it whenever we can? Do we not rush into the jaws of sea-monsters, or throw ourselves within their grasp? Who does not feel within him this intense longing after death as the strongest passion of his heart?"

"I don't know—I don't know," said I. "You are of a different race; I do not understand what you say. But I belong to a race that fears death. I fear death and love life; and I entreat you, I implore you to help me now in my distress, and assist me so that I may save my life and that of Almah."

"I—I help you!" said the Kohen, in new amazement. "Why do you come to me—to me, of all men? Why, I am nothing here. And help you to live—to live! Who ever heard of such a thing?"

And the Kohen looked at me with the same astonishment which I should evince if a man should ask me to help him to die.

Still, I persisted in my entreaty for his help.

"Such a request," said he, "is revolting; you must be mad. Such a request outrages all the instincts of humanity. And even if I could do such violence to my own nature as to help you to such a thing, how do you think I could face my fellow-men, or how could I endure the terrible punishment which would fall upon me?"

"Punishment!" said I. "What! would you be punished?"

"Punished!" said the Kohen. "That, of course, would be inevitable. I should be esteemed an unnatural monster and the chief of criminals. My lot in life

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now is painful enough; but in this case my punishment would involve me in evils without end. Riches would be poured upon me; I should be raised to the rank of Kohen Gadol; I should be removed farther away than ever from the pauper class—so far, indeed, that all hope in life would be over. I should be made the first and noblest and richest in all the land."

He spoke these words just as if he had said, "the lowest, meanest, poorest, and most infamous." It sounded like fresh mockery, and I could not believe but that he was amusing himself at my expense.

"This is cruel," said I. "You are mocking me."

"Cruel—cruel!" said he; "what is cruel? You mean that such a fate would be cruel for me."

"No, no," said I; "but alas! I see we cannot understand one another."

"No," said the Kohen, musingly, as he looked at me. "No, it seems not; but tell me, Atam-or, is it possible that you really fear death—that you really love life?"

"Fear death! love life!" I cried. "Who does not? Who can help it? Why do you ask me that?"

The Kohen clasped his hands in amazement.

"If you really fear death," said he, "what possible thing is there left to love or to hope for? What, then, do you think the highest blessing of man?"

"Long life," said I, "and riches and requited love."

At this the Kohen started back, and stared at me as though I were a raving madman.

"Oh, holy shades of night!" he exclaimed. "What is that you say? What do you mean?"

"We can never understand one another, I fear," said I. "The love of life must necessarily be the strongest passion of man. We are so made. We give up everything for life. A long life is everywhere considered as the highest blessing; and there is no one who is will-

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ing to die, no matter what his suffering may be. Riches also are desired by all, for poverty is the direst curse that can embitter life; and as to requited love, surely that is the sweetest, purest, and most divine joy that the human heart may know."

At this the Kohen burst forth in a strain of high excitement:

"Oh, sacred cavern gloom! Oh, divine darkness! Oh, impenetrable abysses of night! What, oh, what is this! Oh, Atam-or, are you mad? Alas! it must be so. Joy has turned your brain; you are quite demented. You call good evil, and evil good; our light is your darkness, and our darkness your light. Yet surely you cannot be altogether insane. Come, come, let us look further. How is it! Try now to recall your reason. A long life—a life, and a long one! Surely there can be no human being in a healthy state of nature who wishes to prolong his life; and as to riches, is it possible that any one exists who really and honestly desires riches? Impossible! And requited love! Oh, Atam-or, you are mad to-day! You are always strange, but now you have quite taken leave of your senses. I cannot but love you, and yet I can never understand you. Tell me, and tell me truly, what is it that you consider evils, if these things that you have just mentioned are not the very worst?"

He seemed deeply in earnest and much moved. I could not understand him, but could only answer his questions with simple conciseness.

"Poverty, sickness, and death," said I, "are evils; but the worst of all evils is unrequited love."

At these words the Kohen made a gesture of despair.

"It is impossible to understand this," said he. "You talk calmly; you have not the air of a madman. If your fellow-countrymen are all like you, then your race

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is an incomprehensible one. Why, death is the greatest blessing. We all long for it; it is the end of our being. As for riches, they are a curse, abhorred by all. Above all, as to love, we shrink from the thought of requital. Death is our chief blessing, poverty our greatest happiness, and unrequited love the sweetest lot of man."

All this sounded like the ravings of a lunatic, yet the Kohen was not mad. It seemed also like the mockery of some teasing demon; but the gentle and self-denying Kohen was no teasing demon, and mockery with him was impossible. I was therefore more bewildered than ever at this reiteration of sentiments that were so utterly incomprehensible. He, on the other hand, seemed as astonished at my sentiments and as bewildered, and we could find no common ground on which to meet.

"I remember now," said the Kohen, in a musing tone, "having heard of some strange folk at the Amir, who profess to feel as you say you feel, but no one believes that they are in earnest; for although they may even bring themselves to think that they are in earnest in their professions, yet after all every one thinks that they are self-deceived. For you see, in the first place, these feelings which you profess are utterly unnatural. We are so made that we cannot help loving death; it is a sort of instinct. We are also created in such a way that we cannot help longing after poverty. The pauper must always, among all men, be the most envied of mortals. Nature, too, has made us such that the passion of love, when it arises, is so vehement, so all-consuming, that it must always struggle to avoid requital. This is the reason why, when two people find that they love each other, they always separate and avoid one another for the rest of their lives. This is human nature. We cannot help it; and it is this that distinguishes us

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from the animals. Why, if men were to feel as you say you feel, they would be mere animals. Animals fear death; animals love to accumulate such things as they prize; animals, when they love, go in pairs, and remain with one another. But man, with his intellect, would not be man if he loved life and desired riches and sought for requited love."

I sank back in despair. "You cannot mean all this," I said.

He threw at me a piteous glance. "What else can you believe or feel?" said he.

"The very opposite. We are so made that we hate and fear death; to us he is the King of Terrors. Poverty is terrible also, since it is associated with want and woe; it is, therefore, natural to man to strive after riches. As to the passion of love, that is so vehement that the first and only thought is requital. Unrequited love is anguish beyond expression—anguish so severe that the heart will often break under it."

The Kohen clasped his hands in new bewilderment.

"I cannot understand," said he. "A madman might imagine that he loved life and desired riches; but as to love, why even a madman could not think of requital, for the very nature of the passion of love is the most utter self-surrender, and a shrinking from all requital; wherefore, the feeling that leads one to desire requital cannot be love. I do not know what it can be—indeed, I never heard of such a thing before, and the annals of the human race make no mention of such a feeling. For what is love? It is the ardent outflow of the whole being—the yearning of one human heart to lavish all its treasures upon another. Love is more than self-denial; it is self-surrender and utter self-abnegation. Love gives all away, and cannot possibly receive anything in return. A requital of love would mean selfish-

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ness, which would be self-contradiction. The more one loves, the more he must shrink from requital."

"What!" cried I, "among you do lovers never marry?"

"Lovers marry? Never!"

"Do married people never love one another?"

The Kohen shook his head.

"It unfortunately sometimes happens so," said he, "and then the result is, of course, distressing. For the children's sake the parents will often remain with one another, but in many cases they separate. No one can tell the misery that ensues where a husband and wife love one another."

The conversation grew insupportable. I could not follow the Kohen in what seemed the wildest and maddest flights of fancy that ever were known; so I began to talk of other things, and gradually the Kohen was drawn to speak of his own life. The account which he gave of himself was not one whit less strange than his previous remarks, and for this reason I add it here.

"I was born," said he, "in the most enviable of positions. My father and mother were among the poorest in the land. Both died when I was a child, and I never saw them. I grew up in the open fields and public caverns, along with the most esteemed paupers. But, unfortunately for me, there was something wanting in my natural disposition. I loved death, of course, and poverty, too, very strongly; but I did not have that eager and energetic passion which is so desirable, nor was I watchful enough over my blessed estate of poverty. Surrounded as I was by those who were only too ready to take advantage of my ignorance or want of vigilance, I soon fell into evil ways, and gradually, in spite of myself, I found wealth pouring in upon me. Designing men succeeded in winning my consent to re-

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ceive their possessions; and so I gradually fell away from that lofty position in which I was born. I grew richer and richer. My friends warned me, but in vain. I was too weak to resist; in fact, I lacked moral fibre, and had never learned how to say 'No.' So I went on, descending lower and lower in the scale of being. I became a capitalist, an Athon, a general officer, and finally Kohen.

"At length, on one eventful day, I learned that one of my associates had by a long course of reckless folly become the richest man in all the country. He had become Athon, malek, and at last Kohen Gadol. It was a terrible shock, but I trust a salutary one. I at once resolved to reform. That resolution I have steadily kept, and have at least saved myself from descending any lower. It is true, I can hardly hope to become what I once was. It is only too easy to grow rich; and, you know, poverty once forfeited can never return except in rare instances. I have, however, succeeded in getting rid of most of my wealth, chiefly through the fortunate advent of Almah and afterwards of yourself. This, I confess, has been my salvation. Neither of you had any scruples about accepting what was bestowed, and so I did not feel as though I was doing you any wrong in giving you all I had in the world. Most of the people of this city have taken advantage of your extraordinary indifference to wealth, and have made themselves paupers at your expense. I had already become your slave, and had received the promise of being elevated to the rank of scullion in the cavern of the *Mista Kosek.* But now, since this event of your love for Almah, I hope to gain far more. I am almost certain of being made a pauper, and I think I can almost venture to hope some day for the honor of a public death."

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To such a story I had nothing to say. It was sheer madness; yet it was terribly suggestive, and showed how utterly hopeless was my effort to secure the assistance of such a man towards my escape from death.

"A public death!" I said, grimly. "That will be very fortunate! And do you think that you will gain the dignity of being eaten up afterwards?"

The Kohen shook his head in all seriousness.

"Oh, no," said he; "that would be far beyond my deserts. That is an honor which is only bestowed upon the most distinguished."

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE KOSEKIN.

These people call themselves the Kosekin. Their chief characteristic, or, at least, their most prominent one, is their love of darkness, which perhaps is due to their habit of dwelling in caves. Another feeling, equally strong and perhaps connected with this, is their love of death and dislike of life. This is visible in many ways, and affects all their character. It leads to a passionate self-denial, an incessant effort to benefit others at their own expense. Each one hates life and longs for death. He, therefore, hates riches, and all things that are associated with life.

Among the Kosekin every one makes perpetual efforts to serve others, which, however, are perpetually baffled by the unselfishness of these others. People thus spend years in trying to overreach one another, so as to make others richer than themselves. In a race each one tries to keep behind; but as this leads to confusion, there is then a universal effort for each one to be first, so as to put his neighbor in the honorable position of the rear. It is the same way in a hunt. Each one presses forward, so as to honor his companion by leaving him behind. Instead of injuring, every one tries to benefit his neighbor. When one has been benefited by another, he is filled with a passion which may be called Kosekin revenge—namely, a sleepless and vehement desire to bestow some adequate and corresponding benefit on the other. Feuds are thus kept up among families and wars

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among nations. For no one is willing to accept from another any kindness, any gift, or any honor, and all are continually on the watch to prevent themselves from being overreached in this way. Those who are less watchful than others are overwhelmed with gifts by designing men, who wish to attain to the pauper class. The position of Almah and myself illustrates this. Our ignorance of the blessings and honors of poverty led us to receive whatever was offered us. Taking advantage of our innocence and ignorance, the whole city thereupon proceeded to bestow their property upon us, and all became paupers through our fortunate arrival.

No one ever injures another unless by accident, and when this occurs it affords the highest joy to the injured party. He has now a claim on the injurer; he gets him into his power, is able to confer benefits on him and force upon him all that he wishes. The unhappy injurer, thus punished by the reception of wealth, finds himself helpless; and where the injury is great, the injured man may bestow upon the other all his wealth and attain to the envied condition of a pauper.

Among the Kosekin the sick are objects of the highest regard. All classes vie with one another in their attentions. The rich send their luxuries; the paupers, however, not having anything to give, go themselves and wait on them and nurse them. For this there is no help, and the rich grumble, but can do nothing. The sick are thus sought out incessantly, and most carefully tended. When they die there is great rejoicing, since death is a blessing; but the nurses labor hard to preserve them in life, so as to prolong the enjoyment of the high privilege of nursing. Of all sick the incurable are most honored, since they require nursing always. Children also are highly honored and esteemed, and the aged too, since both classes require the care of others,

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and must be the recipients of favors which all are anxious to bestow. Those who suffer from contagious diseases are more sought after than any other class, for in waiting on these there is the chance of gaining the blessing of death; indeed, in these cases much trouble is usually experienced from the rush of those who insist on offering their services.

For it must never be forgotten that the Kosekin love death as we love life; and this accounts for all those ceremonies which to me were so abhorrent, especially the scenes of the *Mista Kosek*. To them a dead human body is no more than the dead body of a bird: there is no awe felt, no sense of sanctity, of superstitious horror; and so I learned, with a shudder, that the hate of life is a far worse thing than the fear of death. This desire for death is, then, a master-passion, and is the key to all their words and acts. They rejoice over the death of friends, since those friends have gained the greatest of blessings; they rejoice also at the birth of children, since those who are born will one day gain the bliss of death.

For a couple to fall in love is the signal for mutual self-surrender. Each insists on giving up the loved one; and the more passionate the love is, the more eager is the desire to have the loved one married to some one else. Lovers have died broken-hearted from being compelled to marry one another. Poets here among the Kosekin celebrate unhappy love which has met with this end. These poets also celebrate defeats instead of victories, since it is considered glorious for one nation to sacrifice itself to another; but to this there are important limitations, as we shall see. Poets also celebrate street-sweepers, scavengers, lamp-lighters, laborers, and above all, paupers, and pass by as unworthy of notice the authors, Meleks, and Kohens of the land.

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The paupers here form the most honorable class. Next to these are the laborers. These have strikes, as with us; but it is always for harder work, longer hours, or smaller pay. The contest between capital and labor rages, but the conditions are reversed; for the grumbling capitalist complains that the laborer will not take as much pay as he ought to, while the laborer thinks the capitalist too persistent in his efforts to force money upon him.

Here among the Kosekin the wealthy class forms the mass of the people, while the aristocratic few consist of the paupers. These are greatly envied by the others, and have many advantages. The cares and burdens of wealth, as well as wealth itself, are here considered a curse, and from all these the paupers are exempt. There is a perpetual effort on the part of the wealthy to induce the paupers to accept gifts, just as among us the poor try to rob the rich. Among the wealthy there is a great and incessant murmur at the obstinacy of the paupers. Secret movements are sometimes set on foot which aim at a redistribution of property and a levelling of all classes, so as to reduce the haughty paupers to the same condition as the mass of the nation. More than once there has been a violent attempt at a revolution, so as to force wealth on the paupers; but as a general thing these movements have been put down and their leaders severely punished. The paupers have shown no mercy in their hour of triumph; they have not conceded one jot to the public demand, and the unhappy conspirators have been condemned to increased wealth and luxury, while the leaders have been made Meleks and Kohens. Thus there are among the Kosekin the unfortunate many who are cursed with wealth, and the fortunate few who are blessed with poverty. These walk while the others ride, and from their squalid huts look proudly and contempt-

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uously upon the palaces of their unfortunate fellow-countrymen.

The love of death leads to perpetual efforts on the part of each to lay down his life for another. This is a grave difficulty in hunts and battles. Confined prisoners dare not fly, for in such an event the guards kill themselves. This leads to fresh rigors in the captivity of the prisoners in case of their recapture, for they are overwhelmed with fresh luxuries and increased splendors. Finally, if a prisoner persist and is recaptured, he is solemnly put to death, not, as with us, by way of severity, but as the last and greatest honor. Here extremes meet; and death, whether for honor or dishonor, is all the same—death—and is reserved for desperate cases. But among the Kosekin this lofty destiny is somewhat embittered by the agonizing thought on the part of the prisoner, who thus gains it, that his wretched family must be doomed, not, as with us, to poverty and want, but, on the contrary, to boundless wealth and splendor.

Among so strange a people it seemed singular to me what offences could possibly be committed which could be regarded and punished as crimes. These, however, I soon found out. Instead of robbers, the Kosekin punish the secret bestowers of their wealth on others. This is regarded as a very grave offence. Analogous to our crime of piracy is the forcible arrest of ships at sea and the transfer to them of valuables. Sometimes the Kosekin pirates give themselves up as slaves. Kidnapping, assault, highway robbery, and crimes of violence have their parallel here in cases where a strong man, meeting a weaker, forces himself upon him as his slave or compels him to take his purse. If the weaker refuse, the assailant threatens to kill himself, which act would lay the other under obligations to receive punish-

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ment from the state in the shape of gifts and honors, or at least subject him to unpleasant inquiries. Murder has its counterpart among the Kosekin in cases where one man meets another, forces money on him, and kills himself. Forgery occurs where one uses another's name so as to confer money on him.

There are many other crimes, all of which are severely punished. The worse the offence the better is the offender treated. Among the Kosekin capital punishment is imprisonment amid the greatest splendor, where the prisoner is treated like a king, and has many palaces and great retinues; for that which we consider the highest they regard as the lowest, and with them the chief post of honor is what we would call the lowest menial office. Of course, among such a people, any suffering from want is unknown, except when it is voluntary. The pauper class, with all their great privileges, have this restriction, that they are forced to receive enough for food and clothing. Some, indeed, manage by living in out-of-the-way places to deprive themselves of these, and have been known to die of starvation; but this is regarded as dishonorable, as taking an undue advantage of a great position, and where it can be proved, the children and relatives of the offender are severely punished according to the Kosekin fashion.

State politics here move, like individual affairs, upon the great principle of contempt for earthly things. The state is willing to destroy itself for the good of other states; but as other states are in the same position, nothing can result. In times of war the object of each army is to honor the other and benefit it by giving it the glory of defeat. The contest is thus most fierce. The Kosekin, through their passionate love of death, are terrible in battle; and when they are also animated by the desire to confer glory on their enemies by defeating them,

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they generally succeed in their aim. This makes them almost always victorious, and when they are not so not a soul returns alive. Their state of mind is peculiar. If they are defeated they rejoice, since defeat is their chief glory; but if they are victorious they rejoice still more in the benevolent thought that they have conferred upon the enemy the joy, the glory, and the honor of defeat.

Here all shrink from governing others. The highest wish of each is to serve. The Meleks and Kohens, whom I at first considered the highest, are really the lowest orders; next to these come the authors, then the merchants, then farmers, then artisans, then laborers, and, finally, the highest rank is reached in the paupers. Happy the aristocratic, the haughty, the envied paupers. The same thing is seen in their armies. The privates here are highest in rank, and the officers come next in different gradations. These officers, however, have the command and the charge of affairs as with us; yet this is consistent with their position, for here to obey is considered nobler than to command. In the fleet the rowers are the highest class; next come the fighting-men; and lowest of all are the officers. War arises from motives as peculiar as those which give rise to private feuds; as, for instance, where one nation tries to force a province upon another; where they try to make each other greater; where they try to benefit unduly each other's commerce; where one may have a smaller fleet or army than has been agreed on, or where an ambassador has been presented with gifts, or received too great honor or attention.

In such a country as this, where riches are disliked and despised, I could not imagine how people could be induced to engage in trade. This, however, was soon explained. The laborers and artisans have to perform their daily work, so as to enable the community to live

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and move and have its being. Their impelling motive is the high one of benefiting others most directly. They refuse anything but the very smallest pay, and insist on giving for this the utmost possible labor. Tradesmen also have to supply the community with articles of all sorts ; merchants have to sail their ships to the same end, all being animated by the desire of effecting the good of others. Each one tries not to make money, but to lose it ; but as the competition is sharp and universal, this is difficult, and the larger portion are unsuccessful. The purchasers are eager to pay as much as possible, and the merchants and traders grow rich in spite of their utmost endeavors. The wealthy classes go into business so as to lose money, but in this they seldom succeed. It has been calculated that only two per cent. in every community succeed in reaching the pauper class. The tendency is for all the labors of the working-class to be ultimately turned upon the unfortunate wealthy class. The workmen being the creators of wealth, and refusing to take adequate pay, cause a final accumulation of the wealth of the community in the hands of the mass of the non-producers, who thus are fixed in their unhappy position, and can hope for no escape except by death. The farmers till the ground, the fishermen fish, the laborers toil, and the wealth thus created is pushed from these incessantly till it all falls upon the lowest class—namely, the rich, including Athons, Meleks, and Kohens. It is a burden that is often too heavy to be borne ; but there is no help for it, and the better-minded seek to cultivate resignation.

Women and men are in every respect absolutely equal, holding precisely the same offices and doing the same work. In general, however, it is observed that women are a little less fond of death than men, and a little less unwilling to receive gifts. For this reason

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they are very numerous among the wealthy class, and abound in the offices of administration. Women serve in the army and navy as well as men, and from their lack of ambition or energetic perseverance they are usually relegated to the lower ranks, such as officers and generals. To my mind it seemed as though the women were in all the offices of honor and dignity, but in reality it was the very opposite. The same is true in the family. The husbands insist on giving everything to the wives and doing everything for them. The wives are therefore universally the rulers of the household, while the husbands have an apparently subordinate, but, to the Kosekin, a more honorable position.

As to the religion of the Kosekin, I could make nothing of it. They believe that after death they go to what they call the world of darkness. The death they long for leads to the darkness that they love; and the death and the darkness are eternal. Still, they persist in saying that the death and the darkness together form a state of bliss. They are eloquent about the happiness that awaits them there in the sunless land—the world of darkness; but for my own part, it always seemed to me a state of nothingness.

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CHAPTER XVII.

BELIEF AND UNBELIEF.

The doctor was here interrupted by Featherstone, who, with a yawn, informed him that it was eleven o'clock, and that human endurance had its limits. Upon this the doctor rolled up the manuscript and put it aside for the night, after which supper was ordered.

"Well," said Featherstone, "what do you think of this last?"

"It contains some very remarkable statements," said the doctor.

"There are certainly monsters enough in it," said Melick—

"'Gorgons and hydras and chimeras dire?'"

"Well, why not?" said the doctor.

"It seems to me," said Melick, "that the writer of this has peopled his world with creatures that resemble the fossil animals more than anything else."

"The so-called fossil animals," said the doctor, "may not be extinct. There are fossil specimens of animals that still have living representatives. There is no reason why many of those supposed to be extinct may not be alive now. It is well known that many very remarkable animals have become extinct within a comparatively recent period. These great birds, of which More speaks, seem to me to belong to these classes. The dodo was in existence fifty years ago, the moa about a hundred years ago. These great birds, together with others, such as the epiornis and palapteryx, have disappeared, not

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through the ordinary course of nature, but by the hand of man. Even in our hemisphere they may yet be found. Who can tell but that the moa or the dodo may yet be lurking somewhere here in the interior of Madagascar, of Borneo, or of Pepua?"

"Can you make out anything about those great birds?" asked Featherstone. "Do they resemble anything that exists now, or has ever existed?"

"Well, yes, I think so," said the doctor. "Unfortunately, More is not at all close or accurate in his descriptions; he has a decidedly unscientific mind, and so one cannot feel sure; yet from his general statements I think I can decide pretty nearly upon the nature and the scientific name of each one of his birds and animals. It is quite evident to me that most of these animals belong to races that no longer exist among us, and that this world at the South Pole has many characteristics which are like those of what is known as the Coal Period. I allude in particular to the vast forests of fern, of gigantic grasses and reeds. At the same time the general climate and the atmosphere seem like what we may find in the tropics at present. It is evident that in More's world various epochs are represented, and that animals of different ages are living side by side."

"What do you think of the opkuk?" asked Featherstone, with a yawn.

"Well, I hardly know."

"Why, it must be a dodo, of course," said Melick, "only magnified."

"That," said the doctor, gravely, "is a thought that naturally suggests itself; but then the opkuk is certainly far larger than the dodo."

"Oh, More put on his magnifying glasses just then."

"The dodo," continued the doctor, taking no notice of this, "in other respects corresponds with More's de-

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scription of the opkuk. Clusius and Bontius give good descriptions, and there is a well-known picture of one in the British Museum. It is a massive, clumsy bird, ungraceful in its form, with heavy movements, wings too short for flight, little or no tail, and down rather than feathers. The body, according to Bontius, is as big as that of the African ostrich, but the legs are very short. It has a large head, great black eyes, long bluish-white bill, ending in a beak like that of a vulture, yellow legs, thick and short, four toes on each foot, solid, long, and armed with sharp black claws. The flesh, particularly on the breast, is fat and esculent. Now, all this corresponds with More's account, except as to the size of the two, for the opkuks are as large as oxen."

"Oh, that's nothing," said Melick; "I'm determined to stand up for the dodo." With this he burst forth singing—

"'Oh, the dodo once lived, but he doesn't live now;
Yet why should a cloud overshadow our brow?
The loss of that bird ne'er should trouble our brains,
For though he is gone, still our claret remains.
Sing do-do—jolly do-do!
Hurrah! in his name let our cups overflow.'

"As for your definition, doctor," continued Melick, "I'll give you one worth a dozen of yours:

"''Twas a mighty bird; those strong, short legs were never known to fail,
And he felt a glow of pride while thinking of that little tail,
And his beak was marked with vigor, curving like a wondrous hook;
Thick and ugly was his body—such a form as made one look!'"

"Melick," said Featherstone, "you're a volatile youth. You mustn't mind him, doctor. He's a professional cynic, sceptic, and scoffer. Oxenden and I, however, are open to conviction, and want to know more about

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those birds and beasts. Can you make anything out of the opmahera?"

The doctor swallowed a glass of wine, and replied,

"Oh, yes; there are many birds, each of which may be the opmahera. There's the fossil bird of Massachusetts, of which nothing is left but the footprints; but some of these are eighteen inches in length, and show a stride of two yards. The bird belonged to the order of the *Grallæ*, and may have been ten or twelve feet in height. Then there is the *Gastornis parisiensis*, which was as tall as an ostrich, as big as an ox, and belongs to the same order as the other. Then there is the *Palapteryx*, of which remains have been found in New Zealand, which was seven or eight feet in height. But the one which to my mind is the real counterpart of the opmahera is the *Dinornis gigantea*, whose remains are also found in New Zealand. It is the largest bird known, with long legs, a long neck, and short wings, useless for flight. One specimen that has been found is upward of thirteen feet in height. There is no reason why some should not have been much taller. More compares its height to that of a giraffe. The Maoris call this bird the *Moa*, and their legends and traditions are full of mention of it. When they first came to the island, six or seven hundred years ago, they found these vast birds everywhere, and hunted them for food. To my mind the dinornis is the opmahera of More. As to riding on them, that is likely enough; for ostriches are used for this purpose, and the dinornis must have been far stronger and fleeter than the ostrich. It is possible that some of these birds may still be living in the remoter parts of our hemisphere."

"What about those monsters," asked Featherstone, "that More speaks of in the sacred hunt?"

"I think," said the doctor, "that I understand pretty

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well what they were, and can identify them all. As the galley passed the estuary of that great river, you remember that he mentions seeing them on the shore. One may have been the *Ichthyosaurus.* This, as the name implies, is a fish-lizard. It has the head of a lizard, the snout of a dolphin, the teeth of an alligator, enormous eyes, whose membrane is strengthened by a bony frame, the vertebræ of fishes, sternum and shoulder-bones like those of the lizard, and the fins of a whale. Bayle calls it the whale of the saurians. Another may have been the *Cheirotherium.* On account of the hand-shaped marks made by its paws, Owen thinks that it was akin to the frogs; but it was a formidable monster, with head and jaws of a crocodile. Another may have been the *Teleosaurus*, which resembled our alligators. It was thirty-five feet in length. Then there was the *Hylæosaurus*, a monster twenty-five feet in length, with a cuirass of bony plates."

"But none of these correspond with More's description of the monster that fought with the galley."

"No," said the doctor, "I am coming to that now. That monster could have been no other than the *Plesiosaurus*, one of the most wonderful animals that has ever existed. Imagine a thing with the head of a lizard, the teeth of a crocodile, the neck of a swan, the trunk and tail of a quadruped, and the fins of a whale. Imagine a whale with its head and neck consisting of a serpent, with the strength of the former and the malignant fury of the latter, and then you will have the plesiosaurus. It was an aquatic animal, yet it had to remain near or on the surface of the water, while its long, serpent-like neck enabled it to reach its prey above or below with swift, far-reaching darts. Yet it had no armor, and could not have been at all a match for the ichthyosaurus. More's account shows, however, that it was a fearful enemy for man to encounter."

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"He seems to have been less formidable than that beast which they encountered in the swamp. Have you any idea what that was?"

"I think it can have been no other than the *Iguanodon*," said the doctor. The remains of this animal show that it must have been the most gigantic of all primeval saurians. Judging from existing remains its length was not less than sixty feet, and larger ones may have existed. It stood high on its legs; the hind ones were larger than the fore. The feet were massive and armed with tremendous claws. It lived on the land and fed on herbage. It had a horny, spiky ridge all along its back. Its tail was nearly as long as its body. Its head was short, its jaws enormous, furnished with teeth of a very elaborate structure, and on its muzzle it carried a curved horn. Such a beast as this might well have caused all that destruction of life on the part of his desperate assailants of which More speaks.

"Then there was another animal," continued the doctor, who was evidently discoursing upon a favorite topic. "It was the one that came suddenly upon More while he was resting with Almah after his flight with the runaway bird. That I take to be the *Megalosaurus*. This animal was a monster of tremendous size and strength. Cuvier thought that it might have been seventy feet in length. It was carnivorous, and therefore more ferocious than the iguanodon, and more ready to attack. Its head was like that of a crocodile, its body massive like that of an elephant, yet larger; its tail was small, and it stood high on its legs, so that it could run with great speed. It was not covered with bony armor, but had probably a hide thick enough to serve the purpose of shell or bone. Its teeth were constructed so as to cut with their edges, and the movement of the jaws produced the combined effect of knife and saw, while their

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inward curve rendered impossible the escape of prey that had once been caught. It probably frequented the river banks, where it fed upon reptiles of smaller size, which inhabited the same places.

"More," continued the doctor, "is too general in his descriptions. He has not a scientific mind, and he gives but few data; yet I can bring before myself very easily all the scenes which he describes, particularly that one in which the megalosaurus approaches, and he rushes to mount the dinornis so as to escape. I see that river, with its trees and shrubs, all unknown now except in museums—the vegetation of the Coal Period—the lepidodendron, the lepidostrobus, the pecopteris, the neuropteris, the lonchopteris, the odontopteris, the sphenopteris, the cyclopteris, the sigellaria veniformis, the sphenophyllium, the calamites—"

Melick started to his feet.

"There, there!" he cried, "hold hard, doctor. Talking of calamities, what greater calamity can there be than such a torrent of unknown words? Talk English, doctor, and we shall be able to appreciate you; but to make your jokes, your conundrums, and your brilliant witticisms in a foreign language isn't fair to us, and does no credit either to your head or your heart."

The doctor elevated his eyebrows, and took no notice of Melick's ill-timed levity.

"All these stories of strange animals," said Oxenden, "may be very interesting, doctor, but I must say that I am far more struck by the account of the people themselves. I wonder whether they are an aboriginal race, or descendants of the same stock from which we came?"

"I should say," remarked the doctor, confidently, "that they are, beyond a doubt, an aboriginal and autochthonous race."

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"I differ from you altogether," said Oxenden, calmly.

"Oh," said the doctor, "there can be no doubt about it. Their complexion, small stature, and peculiar eyes —their love of darkness, their singular characteristics, both physical and moral, all go to show that they can have no connection with the races in our part of the earth."

"Their peculiar eyes," said Oxenden, "are no doubt produced by dwelling in caves for many generations."

"On the contrary," said the doctor, "it is their peculiarity of eye that makes them dwell in caves."

"You are mistaking the cause for the effect, doctor."

"Not at all; it is you who are making that mistake."

"It's the old debate," said Melick—as the poet has it,

> "'Which was first, the egg or the hen?
> Tell me, I pray, ye learned men!'"

"There are the eyeless fishes of the great cave of Kentucky," said Oxenden, "whose eyes have become extinct from living in the dark."

"No," cried the doctor, "the fish that have arisen in that lake have never needed eyes, and have never had them."

Oxenden laughed.

"Well," said he, "I'll discuss the question with you on different grounds altogether, and I will show clearly that these men, these bearded men, must belong to a stock that is nearly related to our own, or, at least, that they belong to a race of men with whom we are all very familiar."

"I should like very much to have you try it," said the doctor.

"Very well," said Oxenden. In the first place, I take their language."

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"Their language!"

"Yes. More has given us very many words in their language. Now he himself says that these words had an Arabic sound. He was slightly acquainted with that language. What will you say if I tell you that these words are still more like Hebrew?"

"Hebrew!" exclaimed the doctor, in amazement.

"Yes, Hebrew," said Oxenden. "They are all very much like Hebrew words, and the difference is not greater than that which exists between the words of any two languages of the Aryan family."

"Oh, if you come to philology I'll throw up the sponge," said the doctor. "Yet I should like to hear what you have to say on that point."

"The languages of the Aryan family," said Oxenden, "have the same general characteristics, and in all of them the differences that exist in their most common words are subject to the action of a regular law. The action of this law is best seen in the changes which take place in the mutes. These changes are indicated in a summary and comprehensive way, by means of what is called 'Grimm's Law.' Take Latin and English, for instance. 'Grimm's Law' tells us, among other things, that in Latin and in that part of English which is of Teutonic origin, a large number of words are essentially the same, and differ merely in certain phonetic changes. Take the word 'father.' In Latin, as also in Greek, it is 'pater.' Now the Latin 'p' in English becomes 'f;' that is, the thin mute becomes the aspirated mute. The same change may be seen in the Latin 'piscis,' which in English is 'fish,' and the Greek 'πυρ,' which in English is 'fire.' Again, if the Latin or Greek word begins with an aspirate, the English word begins with a medial; thus the Latin 'f' is found responsive to the English 'b,' as in Latin 'fagus,' English 'beech,' Latin 'fero,'

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English 'bear.' Again, if the Latin or Greek has the medial, the English has the thin, as in Latin 'duo,' English 'two,' Latin 'genu,' English 'knee.' Now, I find that in many of the words which More mentions this same 'Grimm's Law' will apply; and I am inclined to think that if they were spelled with perfect accuracy they would show the same relation between the Kosekin language and the Hebrew that there is between the Saxon English and the Latin."

The doctor gave a heavy sigh.

"You're out of my depth, Oxenden," said he. "I'm nothing of a philologist."

"By Jove!" said Featherstone, "I like this. This is equal to your list of the plants of the Coal Period, doctor. But I say, Oxenden, while you are about it, why don't you give us a little dose of Anglo-Saxon and Sanscrit? By Jove! the fellow has Bopp by heart, and yet he expects us to argue with him."

"I have it!" cried Melick. "The Kosekin are the lost Ten Tribes. Oxenden is feeling his way to that. He is going to make them out to be all Hebrew; and then, of course, the only conclusion will be that they are the Ten Tribes, who after a life of strange vicissitudes have pulled up at the South Pole. It's a wonder More didn't think of that—or the writer of this yarn, whoever he may be. Well, for my part, I always took a deep interest in the lost Ten Tribes, and thought them a fine body of men."

"Don't think they've got much of the Jew about them," said Featherstone, languidly. They hate riches and all that, you know. Break a Jew's heart to hear of all that property wasted, and money going a begging. Not a bad idea, though, that of theirs about money. Too much money's a howwid baw, by Jove!"

"Well," continued Oxenden, calmly resuming, and

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taking no notice of these interruptions, "I can give you word after word that More has mentioned which corresponds to a kindred Hebrew word in accordance with 'Grimm's Law.' For instance, Kosekin 'Op,' Hebrew 'Oph;' Kosekin 'Athon,' Hebrew 'Adon;' Kosekin 'Salon,' Hebrew 'Shalom.' They are more like Hebrew than Arabic, just as Anglo-Saxon words are more like Latin or Greek than Sanscrit."

"Hurrah!" cried Melick, "we've got him to Sanscrit at last! Now, Oxenden, my boy, trot out the 'Hetopadesa,' the 'Megha Dhuta,' the 'Rig Veda.' Quote Beowulf and Caedmon. Give us a little Zeno, and wind up with 'Lalla Rookh' in modern Persian."

"So I conclude," said Oxenden, calmly, ignoring Melick, "that the Kosekin are a Semitic people. Their complexion and their beards show them to be akin to the Caucasian race, and their language proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that they belong to the Semitic branch of that race. It is impossible for an autochthonous people to have such a language."

"But how," cried the doctor, "how in the name of wonder did they get to the South Pole?"

"Easily enough," interrupted Melick—"Shem landed there from Noah's ark, and left some of his children to colonize the country. That's as plain as a pikestaff. I think, on the whole, that this idea is better than the other one about the Ten Tribes. At any rate they are both mine, and I warn all present to keep their hands off them, for on my return I intend to take out a copyright."

"There's another thing," continued Oxenden, "which is of immense importance, and that is their habit of cave-dwelling. I am inclined to think that they resorted to cave-dwelling at first from some hereditary instinct or other, and that their eyes and their whole

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morals have become affected by this mode of life. Now, as to ornamented caverns, we have many examples—caverns adorned with a splendor fully equal to anything among the Kosekin. There are in India the great Behar caves, the splendid Karli temple with its magnificent sculptures and imposing architecture, and the cavern-temples of Elephanta; there are the subterranean works in Egypt, the temple of Dendera in particular; in Petra we have the case of an entire city excavated from the rocky mountains: yet, after all, these do not bear upon the point in question, for they are isolated cases; and even Petra, though it contained a city, did not contain a nation. But there is a case, and one which is well known, that bears directly upon this question, and gives us the connecting link between the Kosekin and their Semitic brethren in the northern hemisphere."

"What is that?" asked the doctor.

"The Troglodytes," said Oxenden, with impressive solemnity.

"Well, and what do you make out of the Troglodytes?"

"I will explain," said Oxenden. "The name Troglodytes is given to various tribes of men, but those best known and celebrated under this name once inhabited the shores of the Red Sea, both on the Arabian and the Egyptian side. They belonged to the Arabian race, and were consequently a Semitic people. Mark that, for it is a point of the utmost importance. Now, these Troglodytes all lived in caverns, which were formed partly by art and partly by nature, although art must have had most to do with the construction of such vast subterranean works. They lived in great communities in caverns, and they had long tunnels passing from one community to another. Here also they kept their cattle. Some of these people have survived even to our

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own age; for Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, saw them in Nubia.

"The earliest writer who mentions the Troglodytes was Agatharcides, of Cnidos. According to him they were chiefly herdsmen. Their food was the flesh of cattle, and their drink a mixture of milk and blood. They dressed in the skins of cattle; they tattooed their bodies. They were very swift of foot, and were able to run down wild beasts in the hunt. They were also greatly given to robbery, and caravans passing to and fro had to guard against them.

"One feature in their character has to my mind a strange significance, and that is their feelings with regard to death. It was not the Kosekin love of death, yet it was something which must certainly be considered as approximating to it. For Agatharcides says that in their burials they were accustomed to fasten the corpse to a stake, and then gathering round, to pelt it with stones amid shouts of laughter and wild merriment. They also used to strangle the old and infirm, so as to deliver them from the evils of life. These Troglodytes, then, were a nation of cave-dwellers, loving the dark—not exactly loving death, yet at any rate regarding it with merriment and pleasure; and so I cannot help seeing a connection between them and the Kosekin."

"Yes," said the doctor, "but how did they get to the South Pole?"

"That," said Oxenden, "is a question which I do not feel bound to answer."

"Oh, it is easy enough to answer that," said Melick. "They, of course, dug through the earth."

Oxenden gave a groan.

"I think I'll turn in for the night," said he, rising. Upon this the others rose also and followed his example.

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On the following morning the calm still continued. None of the party rose until very late, and then over the breakfast-table they discussed the manuscript once more, each from his own point of view, Melick still asserting a contemptuous scepticism—Oxenden and the doctor giving reasons for their faith, and Featherstone listening without saying much on either side.

At length it was proposed to resume the reading of the manuscript, which task would now devolve upon Oxenden. They adjourned to the deck, where all disposed themselves in easy attitudes to listen to the continuation of More's narrative.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

A VOYAGE OVER THE POLE.

The discovery of our love had brought a crisis in our fate for me and Almah. The Kohen hailed it with joy, for now was the time when he would be able to present us to the Kohen Gadol. Our doom was certain and inevitable. We were to be taken to the *amir*; we were to be kept until the end of the dark season, and then we were both to be publicly sacrificed. After this our bodies were to be set apart for the hideous rites of the *Mista Kosek*. Such was the fate that lay before us.

The Kohen was now anxious to take us to the *amir*. I might possibly have persuaded him to postpone our departure, but I saw no use in that. It seemed better to go, for it was possible that amid new scenes and among new people there might be hope. This, too, seemed probable to Almah, who was quite anxious to go. The Kohen pressed forward the preparations, and at length a galley was ready for us.

This galley was about three hundred feet in length and fifty in width, but not more than six feet in depth. It was like a long raft. The rowers, two hundred in number, sat on a level with the water, one hundred on each side. The oars were small, being not more than twelve feet in length, but made of very light, tough material, with very broad blades. The galley was steered with broad-bladed paddles at both ends. There was no mast or sail. Astern was a light poop, surrounded by a pavilion, and forward there was another. At the bow

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there was a projecting platform, used chiefly in fighting the *thannin*, or sea-monsters, and also in war. There were no masts or flags or gay streamers; no brilliant colors; all was intensely black, and the ornaments were of the same hue.

We were now treated with greater reverence than ever, for we were looked upon as the recipients of the highest honor that could fall to any of the Kosekin—namely, the envied dignity of a public death. As we embarked the whole city lined the public ways, and watched us from the quays, from boats, and from other galleys. Songs were sung by a chosen choir of paupers, and to the sound of this plaintive strain we moved out to sea.

"This will be a great journey for me," said the Kohen, as we left the port. "I hope to be made a pauper at least, and perhaps gain the honor of a public death. I have known people who have gained death for less. There was an Athon last year who attacked a pehmet with forty men and one hundred and twenty rowers. All were killed or drowned except himself. In reward for this he gained the *mudecheb*, or death recompense. In addition to this he was set apart for the *Mista Kosek*."

"Then, with you, when a man procures the death of others he is honored?"

"Why, yes; how could it be otherwise?" said the Kohen. "Is it not the same with you? Have you not told me incredible things about your people, among which there were a few that seemed natural and intelligible? Among these was your system of honoring above all men those who procure the death of the largest number. You, with your pretended fear of death, wish to meet it in battle as eagerly as we do, and your most renowned men are those who have sent most to death."

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To this strange remark I had no answer to make.

The air out at sea now grew chillier. The Kohen noticed it also, and offered me his cloak, which I refused. He seemed surprised, and smiled.

"You are growing like one of us," said he. "You will soon learn that the greatest happiness in life is to do good to others and sacrifice yourself. You already show this in part. When you are with Almah you act like one of the Kosekin. You watch her to see and anticipate her slightest wish; you are eager to give her everything. She, on the other hand, is equally eager to give up all to you. Each one of you is willing to lay down life for the other. You would gladly rush upon death to save her from harm, much as you pretend to fear death; and so I see that with Almah you will soon learn how sweet a thing death may be."

"To live without her," said I, "would be so bitter that death with her would indeed be sweet. If I could save her life by laying down my own, death would be sweeter still; and not one of you Kosekin would meet it so gladly."

The Kohen smiled joyously.

"Oh, almighty and wondrous power of Love!" he exclaimed, "how thou hast transformed this foreigner! Oh, Atam-or! you will soon be one of us altogether. For see, how is it now? You pretend to love riches and life, and yet you are ready to give up everything for Almah."

"Gladly, gladly!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," he said, "all that you have you would gladly lavish on her, and would rejoice to make yourself a pauper for her sweet sake. You also would rejoice equally to give up life for her. Is it not so?"

"It is," said I.

"Then I see by this that Almah has awakened within

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you your true human nature. Thus far it has lain dormant; it has been concealed under a thousand false and unnatural habits, arising from your strange native customs. You have been brought up under some frightful system, where nature is violated. Here among us your true humanity is unfolded, and with Almah you are like the Kosekin. Soon you will learn new lessons, and will find out that there is a new and a final self-abnegation in perfect love; and your love will never rest till you have separated yourself from Almah, so that love can have its perfect work."

The sea now opened wide before us, rising up high as if half-way to the zenith, giving the impression of a vast ascent to endless distances. Around the shores spread themselves, with the shadowy outlines of the mountains; above was the sky, all clear, with faint aurora-flashes and gleaming stars. Hand-in-hand with Almah I stood and pointed out the constellations as we marked them, while she told me of the different divisions known among the Kosekin as well as her own people. There, high in the zenith, was the southern polar-star, not exactly at the pole, nor yet of very great brightness, but still sufficiently noticeable.

Looking back, we saw, low down, parts of the Phœnix and the Crane; higher up, the Toucana, Hydrus, and Pavo. On our right, low down, was the beautiful Altar; higher up, the Triangle; while on the left were the Sword-fish and the Flying-fish. Turning to look forward, we beheld a more splendid display. Then, over the bow of the vessel, between the Centaur, which lay low, and Musca Indica, which rose high, there blazed the bright stars of the Southern Cross—a constellation, if not the brightest, at least the most conspicuous and attractive in all the heavens. All around there burned other stars, separated widely. Then, over the stern,

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gleamed the splendid lustre of Achernar, on the left the brilliant glow of *a* Robur and Canopus, and low down before us the bright light of Argo. It was a scene full of splendor and fascination. After a time a change came over the sky: the aurora-flashes, at first faint, gradually increased in brilliancy till the stars grew dim, and all the sky, wherever the eye might turn from the horizon to the zenith, seemed filled with lustrous flames of every conceivable hue. Colossal beams radiated from the pole towards the horizon till the central light was dissipated, and there remained encircling us an infinite colonnade of flaming pillars that towered to the stars. These were all in motion, running upon one another, incessantly shifting and changing; new scenes forever succeeded to old; pillars were transformed to pyramids, pyramids to fiery bars; these in their turn were transformed to other shapes, and all the while one tint of innumerable hues overspread the entire circle of the sky.

Our voyage occupied several *joms;* but our progress was continuous, for different sets of rowers relieved one another at regular intervals. On the second *jom* a storm broke out. The sky had been gathering clouds during sleeping-time, and when we awoke we found the sea all lashed to fury, while all around the darkness was intense. The storm grew steadily worse; the lightning flashed, the thunder pealed, and at length the sea was so heavy that rowing was impossible. Upon this the oars were all taken in, and the galley lay tossing upon the furious sea, amid waves that continually beat upon her.

And now a scene ensued that filled me with amazement, and took away all my thoughts from the storm. It seemed impossible that so frail a bark could stand the fury of the waves. Destruction was inevitable, and

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I was expecting to see the usual signs of grief and despair—wondering, too, how these rowers would preserve their subordination. But I had forgotten in my excitement the strange nature of the Kosekin. Instead of terror there was joy, instead of wild despair there was peace and serene delight.

The lightning-flashes revealed a wonderful scene. There were all the rowers, each one upon his seat, and from them all there came forth a chant which was full of triumph, like a song of public welcome to some great national hero, or a song of joy over victory. The officers embraced one another and exchanged words of delight. The Kohen, after embracing all the others, turned to me, and, forgetting my foreign ways, exclaimed, in a tone of enthusiastic delight,

"We are destroyed! Death is near! Rejoice!"

Accustomed as I was to the perils of the sea, I had learned to face death without flinching. Almah, too, was calm, for to her this death seemed preferable to that darker fate which awaited us; but the words of the Kohen jarred upon my feelings.

"Do you not intend to do anything to save the ship?" I asked.

He laughed joyously.

"There's no occasion," said he. "When the oars are taken in we always begin to rejoice. And why not? Death is near—it is almost certain. Why should we do anything to distract our minds and mar our joy? For oh, dear friend, the glorious time has come when we can give up life—life, with all its toils, its burdens, its endless bitternesses, its perpetual evils. Now we shall have no more suffering from vexatious and oppressive riches, from troublesome honors, from a surplus of food, from luxuries and delicacies, and all the ills of life."

"But what is the use of being born at all?" I asked,

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in a wonder that never ceased to rise at every fresh display of Kosekin feeling.

"The use?" said the Kohen. "Why, if we were not born, how could we know the bliss of dying, or enjoy the sweetness of death? Death is the end of being—the one sweet hope and crown and glory of life, the one desire and hope of every living man. The blessing is denied to none. Rejoice with me, oh Atam-or! you will soon know its blessedness as well as I."

He turned away. I held Almah in my arms, and we watched the storm by the lightning-flashes and waited for the end. But the end came not. The galley was light, broad, and buoyant as a life-boat; at the same time it was so strongly constructed that there was scarcely any twist or contortion in the sinewy fabric. So we floated buoyantly and safely upon the summit of vast waves, and a storm that would have destroyed a ship of the European fashion scarcely injured this in the slightest degree. It was as indestructible as a raft and as buoyant as a bubble; so we rode out the gale, and the death which the Kosekin invoked did not come at all.

The storm was but short-lived; the clouds dispersed, and soon went scudding over the sky; the sea went down. The rowers had to take their oars once more, and the reaction that followed upon their recent rejoicings was visible in universal gloom and dejection. As the clouds dispersed the aurora lights came out more splendid than ever, and showed nothing but melancholy faces. The rowers pulled with no life or animation; the officers stood about sighing and lamenting; Almah and I were the only ones that rejoiced over this escape from death.

Joms passed. We saw other sights; we met with galleys and saw many ships about the sea. Some were

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"THERE WERE ALL THE ROWERS, EACH ONE UPON HIS SEAT, AND FROM THEM ALL THERE CAME FORTH A CHANT WHICH WAS FULL OF TRIUMPH."

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moved by sails only; these were merchant ships, but they had only square sails, and could not sail in any other way than before the wind. Once or twice I caught glimpses of vast shadowy objects in the air. I was startled and terrified; for, great as were the wonders of this strange region, I had not yet suspected that the air itself might have denizens as tremendous as the land or the sea. Yet so it was, and afterwards during the voyage I saw them often. One in particular was so near that I observed it with ease. It came flying along in the same course with us, at a height of about fifty feet from the water. It was a frightful monster, with a long body and vast wings like those of a bat. Its progress was swift, and it soon passed out of sight. To Almah the monster created no surprise ; she was familiar with them, and told me that they were very abundant here, but that they never were known to attack ships. She informed me that they were capable of being tamed if caught when young, though in her country they were never made use of. The name given by the Kosekin to these monsters is *athaleb*.

At length we drew near to our destination. We reached a large harbor at the end of a vast bay: here the mountains extended around, and before us there arose terrace after terrace of twinkling lights running away to immense distances. It looked like a city of a million inhabitants, though it may have contained far less than that. By the brilliant aurora light I could see that it was in general shape and form precisely like the city that we had left, though far larger and more populous. The harbor was full of ships and boats of all sorts, some lying at the stone quays, others leaving port, others entering. Galleys passed and repassed, and merchant ships with their clumsy sails, and small fishing-boats. From afar arose the deep hum of a vast

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multitude and the low roar that always ascends from a populous city.

The galley hauled alongside her wharf, and we found ourselves at length in the mighty *amir* of the Kosekin. The Kohen alone landed; the rest remained on board, and Almah and I with them.

Other galleys were here. On the wharf workmen were moving about. Just beyond were caverns that looked like warehouses. Above these was a terraced street, where a vast multitude moved to and fro—a living tide as crowded and as busy as that in Cheapside.

After what seemed a long time the Kohen returned. This time he came with a number of people, all of whom were in cars drawn by opkuks. Half were men and half women. These came aboard, and it seemed as though we were to be separated; for the women took Almah, while the men took me.

Upon this I entreated the Kohen not to separate us. I informed him that we were both of a different race from his, that we did not understand their ways; we should be miserable if separated.

I spoke long and with all the entreaty possible to one with my limited acquaintance with the language. My words evidently impressed them: some of them even wept.

"You make us sad," said the Kohen. "Willingly would we do everything that you bid, for we are your slaves; but the state law prevents. Still, in your case, the law will be modified; for you are in such honor here that you may be considered as beyond the laws. For the present, at least, we cannot separate you."

These words brought much consolation. After this we landed, and Almah and I were still together.

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE WONDERS OF THE "AMIR."

We were drawn on cars up to the first terraced street, and here we found the vast multitude which we had seen from a distance. Crossing this street, we ascended and came to another precisely like it; then, still going on, we came to a third. Here there was an immense space, not overgrown with trees like the streets, but perfectly open. In the midst arose a lofty pyramid, and as I looked at it I could not refrain from shuddering; for it looked like the public altar, upon which in due time I should be compelled to make my appearance, and be offered up as a victim to the terrific superstitions of the Kosekin.

Crossing this great square, we came to a vast portal, which opened into a cavern with twinkling lights. The city itself extended above this, for we could see the terraced streets rising above our heads; but here our progress ended at the great cavern in the chief square, opposite the pyramid.

On entering the cavern we traversed an antechamber, and then passing on we reached a vast dome, of dimensions so great that I could perceive no end in that gloom. The twinkling lights served only to disclose the darkness and to indicate the immensity of the cavern. In the midst there arose two enormous columns, which were lost in the gloom above.

It was only by passing through this that we learned its great extent. We at length came to the other end,

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and here we saw numerous passages leading away. The Kohen led us through one of these, and after passing through several other domes of smaller dimensions we at length reached an apartment where we stopped. This place was furnished with couches and hangings, and lighted with flaming lamps. The light was distressing to those who had accompanied us, and many of them left, while the few who remained had to cover their eyes. Here we found that all preparations had been made. The apartments were all illuminated, though our love of light never ceased to be a matter of amazement to the Kosekin, and a bounteous repast was spread for us. But the Kohen and the others found the light intolerable, and soon left us to ourselves.

After the repast some women appeared to take Almah to her chamber, and, with the usual kindness of the Kosekin, they assured her that she would not be expected to obey the law of separation, but that she was to remain here, where she would be always within reach of me.

After her departure there came to visit me the lowest man in all the land of the Kosekin, though, according to our view, he would be esteemed the highest. This was the *Kohen Gadol.* His history had already been told me. I had learned that through lack of Kosekin virtue he had gradually sunk to this position, and now was compelled to hold in his hands more wealth, power, and display than any other man in the nation.

He was a man of singular appearance. The light was not so troublesome to him as to the others—he merely kept his eyes shaded; but he regarded me with a keen look of inquiry that was suggestive of shrewdness and cunning. I confess it was with a feeling of relief that I made this discovery; for I longed to find some one among this singular people who was selfish, who feared death, who loved life, who loved riches, and had some-

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thing in common with me. This I thought I perceived in the shrewd, cunning face of the Kohen Gadol, and I was glad; for I saw that while he could not possibly be more dangerous to me than those self-sacrificing, self-denying cannibals whom I had thus far known, he might prove of some assistance, and might help me to devise means of escape. If I could only find some one who was a coward, and selfish and avaricious—if this Kohen Gadol could but be he—how much brighter my life would be! And so there happened to me an incredible thing, that my highest wish was now to find in the Kohen Gadol cowardice, avarice, and selfishness.

The Kohen was accompanied by a young female, richly attired, whom I afterwards learned to be his daughter. Her name was Layelah, and she filled the office of *Malca*, which signifies queen; and though honorable with us above all, is among the Kosekin the lowest in the land. Layelah was so beautiful that I looked at her in amazement. She was very tall for one of the Kosekin, which made her stature equal to that of an ordinary girl with us; her hair was rich, dark, and luxuriant, gathered about her head in great masses and bound by a golden band. Her features were delicate and perfect in their outline; her expression was noble and commanding. Her eyes were utterly unlike those of the other Kosekin; the upper lids had a slight droop, but that was all, and that was the nearest approach to the national blink. Her first entrance into the room seemed to dazzle her, and she shaded her eyes for a few moments, but after that she looked at me fixedly, and seemed to suffer no more inconvenience than I did. The perfect liberty of women among the Kosekin made this visit from her quite as natural as that of her father; and though she said but little on this occasion, she was an attentive listener and close observer.

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Their visit was long, for they were evidently full of curiosity. They had heard much about me and wished to see more. It was the first time that I had found among the Kosekin the slightest desire to know where I had come from. Hitherto all had been content with the knowledge that I was a foreigner. Now, however, I found in the Kohen Gadol and Layelah a curiosity that was most eager and intense. They questioned me about my country, about the great world beyond the mountains, about the way in which I had come here, about the manners and customs of my countrymen. They were eager to know about those great nations of which I spoke, who loved light and life; about men who loved themselves better than others; of that world where men feared death and loved life, and sought after riches and lived in the light.

The sleeping-time came and passed, and my visitors were still full of eager questionings. It was Layelah who at last thought of the lateness of the hour. At a word from her the Kohen Gadol rose, with many apologies, and prepared to go. But before he left he said:

"When I was a child I was shipwrecked, and was taken up by a ship which conveyed me to a nation beyond the sea. There I grew up to manhood. I learned their language and manners and customs, and when I returned home I found myself an alien here. I do not love darkness or death, I do not hate riches, and the result is that I am what I am. If I were like the rest of my countrymen, my lot would make me miserable; but as it is I prefer it to any other, and consider myself not the lowest but the greatest in the land. My daughter is like me, and instead of being ashamed of her station she is proud of it, and would not give it up even to become a pauper. I will see you again. I have much to say."

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With these words the Kohen Gadol retired, followed by Layelah, leaving me more hopeful than I had been for a long time.

For many *joms* following I received visits from the Kohen Gadol and from Layelah. Almah was with me until sleeping-time, and then these other visitors would come. In this, at least, they resembled the other Kosekin, that they never dreamed of interfering with Almah when she might wish to be with me. Their visits were always long, and we had much to say; but what I lost of sleep I always made up on the following *jom*. The Kohen Gadol, with his keen, shrewd face, interested me greatly; but Layelah, with her proud face and air of command, was a positive wonder.

I soon learned that the Kohen Gadol was what we term "a man of advanced views," or perhaps a "Reformer," or a "Philosophic Radical," it matters not which; suffice it to say that his ideas and feelings differed from those of his nation, and if carried out would be equal to a revolution in politics and morals.

The Kohen Gadol advocated selfishness as the true law of life, without which no state can prosper. There were a few of similar views, but they were all regarded with great contempt by the multitude, and had to suffer the utmost rigor of the law; for they were all endowed with vast wealth, compelled to live in the utmost splendor and luxury, to have enormous retinues, and to wield the chief power in politics and in religion. Even this, however, had not changed the sentiments of the condemned, and I learned that they were laboring incessantly, notwithstanding their severe punishment, to disseminate their peculiar doctrines. These were formulated as follows:

1. A man should not love others better than himself.
2. Life is not an evil to be got rid of.

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3. Other things are to be preferred to death.
4. Poverty is not the best state for man.
5. Unrequited love is not the greatest happiness.
6. Lovers may sometimes marry.
7. To serve is not more honorable than to command.
8. Defeat is not more glorious than victory.
9. To save a life should not be regarded as a criminal offence.
10. The paupers should be forced to take a certain amount of wealth, to relieve the necessities of the rich.

These articles were considered both by the Kohen Gadol and by Layelah to be remarkable for their audacity, and were altogether too advanced for reception by any except the chosen few. With the multitude he had to deal differently, and had to work his way by concealing his opinions. He had made a great conspiracy, in which he was still engaged, and had gained immense numbers of adherents by allowing them to give him their whole wealth. Through his assistance many Athons and Kohens and Meleks had become artisans, laborers, and even paupers; but all were bound by him to the strictest secrecy. If any one should divulge the secret, it would be ruin to him and to many others; for they would at once be punished by the bestowal of the extremest wealth, by degradation to the rank of rulers and commanders, and by the severest rigors of luxury, power, splendor, and magnificence known among the Kosekin. Overwhelmed thus with the cares of government, crushed under the weight of authority and autocratic rule, surrounded by countless slaves all ready to die for them, their lives would be embittered and their punishment would be more than they could bear. But the philosophic Kohen Gadol dared all these punishments, and pursued his way calmly and pertinaciously.

Nothing surprised the Kohen Gadol so much as the manner in which I received his confidences. He half expected to startle me by his boldness, but was himself con-

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founded by my words. I told him that in my country self was the chief consideration, self-preservation the law of nature; death the King of Terrors; wealth the object of universal search, poverty the worst of evils; unrequited love nothing less than anguish and despair; to command others the highest glory; victory, honor; defeat, intolerable shame; and other things of the same sort, all of which sounded in his ears, as he said, with such tremendous force that they were like peals of thunder. He shook his head despondently; he could not believe that such views as mine could ever be attained to among the Kosekin. But Layelah was bolder, and with all a woman's impetuosity grasped at my fullest meaning and held it firm.

"He is right," said Layelah — "the heaven-born Atam-or. He shall be our teacher. The rich shall be esteemed, the poor shall be down-trodden; to rule over others shall be glorious, to serve shall be base; victory shall be an honor, defeat a shame; selfishness, self-seeking, luxury, and indulgence shall be virtues; poverty, want, and squalor shall be things of abhorrence and contempt."

The face of Layelah glowed with enthusiasm as she said these words, and I saw in her a daring, intrepid, and high-hearted woman, full of a woman's headlong impetuosity and disregard of consequences. In me she saw one who seemed to her like a prophet and teacher of a new order of things, and her whole soul responded to the principles which I announced. It required immense strength of mind and firmness of soul to separate herself from the prevalent sentiment of her nation; and though nature had done much for her in giving her a larger portion of original selfishness than was common to her people, still she was a child of the Kosekin, and her daring was all the more remarkable. And so she went

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further than her father, and adopted my extreme views when he shrank back, and dared more unflinchingly the extremest rigors of the national law, and all that the Kosekin could inflict in the way of wealth, luxury, supreme command, palatial abodes, vast retinues of slaves, and the immense degradation of the queenly office.

I spoke to her in a warning voice about her rashness.

"Oh," said she, "I have counted the cost, and am ready to accept all that they can inflict. I embrace the good cause, and will not give it up—no, not even if they could increase my wealth a thousand-fold, and sentence me to live a hundred seasons. I can bear their utmost inflictions of wealth, power, magnificence; I could even bear being condemned to live forever in the light. Oh, my friend, it is the conviction of right and the support of conscience that strengthens one to bear the greatest evils that man can inflict."

From these words it was evident to me that Layelah was a true child of the Kosekin; for though she was of advanced sentiments she still used the language of her people, and spoke of the punishments of the law as though they were punishments in reality. Now, to me and to Almah these so-called punishments seemed rewards.

It was impossible for me to avoid feeling a very strong regard for this enthusiastic and beautiful girl; all the more, indeed, because she evinced such an undisguised admiration for me. She evidently considered me some superior being, from some superior race; and although my broken and faulty way of speaking the language was something of a trial, still she seemed to consider every word I uttered as a maxim of the highest wisdom. The tritest of truths, the commonest of platitudes, the most familiar of proverbs or old saws current among us were eagerly seized by Layelah, and accepted

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as truths almost divine—as new doctrines for the guidance of the human race. These she would discuss with me; she would put them into better and more striking language, and ask for my opinion. Then she would write them down.

For the Kosekin knew the art of writing. They had an alphabet of their own, which was at once simple and very scientific. There were no vowels, but only consonant sounds, the vowels being supplied in reading, just as if one should write the words *fthr* or *dghtr*, and read them father and daughter. Their letters were as follows: P, K, T, B, G, D, F, Ch, Th, M, L, N, S, H, R. There were also three others, which have no equivalents in English.

It soon became evident to me that Layelah had a complete ascendency over her father; that she was not only the Malea of the *amir*, but the presiding spirit and the chief administrative genius of the whole nation of the Kosekin. She seemed to be a new Semiramis—one who might revolutionize an empire and introduce a new order of things. Such, indeed, was her high ambition, and she plainly avowed it to me; but what was more, she frankly informed me that she regarded me as a Heaven-sent teacher—as one who in this darkness could tell her of the nations of light—who could instruct her in the wisdom of other and greater races, and help her to accomplish her grand designs.

As for Almah, she seemed quite beneath the notice of the aspiring Layelah. She never noticed her, she never spoke of her, and she always made her visits to me after Almah had gone.

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CHAPTER XX.

THE DARK MAIDEN LAYELAH.

Layelah at length began to make pointed remarks about Almah.

"She loves you," said she, "and you love her. How is it that you do not give each other up?"

"I would die rather than give up Almah," said I.

Layelah smiled. "That sounds strange to the Kosekin," said she, "for here to give up your love and to die are both esteemed the greatest possible blessings. But Almah should give you up. It is the women with us who make the beginning. Women generally fall in love first, and it is expected that they will tell their love first. The delicacy of a woman's feelings makes this natural, for if a man tells his love to a woman who does not love him, it shocks her modesty; while if a woman tells a man, he has no modesty to shock."

"That is strange," said I; "but suppose the man does not love the woman?"

"Why, no woman wants to be loved; she only wants to love."

At this I felt somewhat bewildered.

"That," said Layelah," is unrequited love, which is the chief blessing here, though for my part I am a philosopher, and would wish when I love to be loved in return."

"And then," said I, "if so, would you give up your lover, in accordance with the custom of your country?"

Layelah's dark eyes rested on me for a moment with

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a glance of intense earnestness and profound meaning. She drew a long breath, and then said, in a low and tremulous voice,

"Never !"

Layelah was constantly with me, and at length used to come at an earlier time, when Almah was present. Her manner towards Almah was full of the usual Kosekin courtesy and gracious cordiality. She was still intent upon learning from me the manners, customs, and principles of action of the race to which I belonged. She had an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and her curiosity extended to all those great inventions which are the wonder of Christendom. Locomotives and steamboats were described to her under the names of "horses of fire" and "ships of fire;" printing was "letters of power;" the electric telegraph "messages of lightning;" the organ "lute of giants," and so on. Yet, in spite of the eagerness with which she made her inquiries, and the diligence with which she noted all down, I could see that there was in her mind something lying beneath it all—a far more earnest purpose, and a far more personal one, than the pursuit of useful knowledge.

Layelah was watchful of Almah; she seemed studying her to see how far this woman of another race differed from the Kosekin. She would often turn from me and talk with Almah for a long time, questioning her about her people and their ways. Almah's manner was somewhat reserved, and it was rendered somewhat more so from the fact that her mind was always full of the prospect of our impending doom. Each *jom*, as it came and went, brought us nearer to that awful time, and the hour was surely coming when we should be taken to the outer square and to the top of the pyramid of sacrifice.

Once Layelah sat for some time silent and involved in thought. At length she began to speak to me.

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"Almah," said she, "is very different from us. She loves you and you love her. She ought to give you up. Almah, you ought to give up Atam-or, since you love him."

Almah looked confused, and made some reply to the effect that she belonged to a different race with different customs.

"But you should follow our customs. You are one of us now. You can easily find another who will take him."

Almah threw a piteous glance at me and said nothing.

"I," said Layelah, "will take him."

She spoke these words with an air of magnanimity, as though putting it in the light of a favor to Almah; but Almah did not make any reply, and after some silence Layelah spoke of something else.

Not long after we were alone together, and Layelah returned to the subject. She referred to Almah's want of sympathy with the manners of the Kosekin, and asserted that she ought to aim after a separation.

"I love her," said I, with great warmth, "and will never give her up."

"But she must give you up; it is the woman's place to take the first step. I should be willing to take you."

As Layelah said this she looked at me very earnestly, as if anxious to see how I accepted this offer. I loved Almah, but Layelah also was most agreeable, and I liked her very much; indeed, so much so that I could not bear to say anything that might hurt her feelings. Among all the Kosekin there was not one who was not infinitely inferior to her in my eyes. Still, I loved Almah, and I told her so again, thinking that in this way I might repel her without giving offence.

But Layelah was quite ready with her reply.

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"If you love Almah," said she, "that is the very reason why you should marry me."

This made me feel more embarrassed than ever.

I stammered something about my own feelings—the manners and customs of my race—and the fear that I had of acting against my own principles. "Besides," I added, "I'm afraid it would make you unhappy."

"Oh, no," said Layelah, briskly; "on the contrary, it would make me very happy indeed."

I began to be more and more aghast at this tremendous frankness, and was utterly at a loss what to say.

"My father," continued Layelah, "is different from the other Kosekin, and so am I. I seek requital for love, and do not think it an evil."

A sudden thought now suggested itself, and I caught at it as a last resort.

"You have," said I, "some lover among the Kosekin. Why do you not marry him?"

Layelah smiled.

"I have no lover that I love," said she, "among the Kosekin."

My feeble effort was thus a miserable failure. I was about saying something concerning the Kosekin alphabet, or something else of an equally appropriate nature, when she prevented me.

"Atam-or," said she, in a low voice.

"Layelah," said I, with my mind full of confusion.

"I love you!"

She sat looking at me with her beautiful face all aglow, her dark eyes fixed on mine with an intense and eager gaze. I looked at her and said not one single word. Layelah was the first to break the awkward silence.

"You love Almah, Atam-or; but say, do you not love me? You smile at me, you meet me always when I

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come with warm greetings, and you seem to enjoy yourself in my society. Say, Atam-or, do you not love me?"

This was a perilous and a tremendous moment. The fact is, I did like Layelah very much indeed, and I wanted to tell her so; but my ignorance of the language did not allow me to observe those nice distinctions of meaning between the words "like" and "love." I knew no other word than the one Kosekin word meaning "love," and could not think of any meaning "like." It was, therefore, a very trying position for me.

"Dear Layelah," said I, floundering and stammering in my confusion, I love you; I—"

But here I was interrupted without waiting for any further words; the beautiful creature flung her arms around me and clung to me with a fond embrace. As for me, I was utterly confounded, bewildered, and desperate. I thought of my darling Almah, whom alone I loved. It seemed at that moment as though I was not only false to her, but as if I was even endangering her life. My only thought now was to clear up my meaning.

"Dear Layelah," said I, as I sat with her arms around me, and with my own around her slender waist, "I do not want to hurt your feelings."

"Oh, Atam-or! oh, my love! never, never did I know such bliss as this."

Here again I was overwhelmed, but I still persisted in my effort.

"Dear Layelah," said I, "I love Almah most dearly and most tenderly."

"Oh, Atam-or, why speak of that? I know it well, and so by our Kosekin law you give her up; among us lovers never marry. So you take me, your own Layelah, and you will have me for your bride; and my love for you is ten thousand times stronger than that of the cold and melancholy Almah. She may marry my papa."

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This suggestion filled me with dismay.

"Oh, no," said I. "Never, never will I give up Almah!"

"Certainly not," said Layelah; "you do not give her up—she gives you up."

"She never will," said I.

"Oh, yes," said Layelah, "I will tell her that you wish it."

"I do not wish it," said I. "I love her, and will never give her up."

"It's all the same," said Layelah. "You cannot marry her at all. No one will marry you. You and Almah are victims, and the state has given you the matchless honor of death. Common people who love one another may marry if they choose, and take the punishment which the law assigns; but illustrious victims who love cannot marry, and so, my Atam-or, you have only me."

I need not say that all this was excessively embarrassing. I was certainly fond of Layelah, and liked her too much to hurt her feelings. Had I been one of the Kosekin I might perhaps have managed better; but being a European, a man of the Aryan race—being such, and sitting there with the beautiful Layelah lavishing all her affections upon me—why, it stands to reason that I could not have the heart to wound her feelings in any way. I was taken at an utter disadvantage. Never in my life had I heard of women taking the initiative. Layelah had proposed to me; she would not listen to refusal, and I had not the heart to wound her. I had made all the fight I could by persisting in asserting my love for Almah, but all my assertions were brushed lightly aside as trivial things.

Let any gentleman put himself in my situation, and ask himself what he would do. What would he do if

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such a thing could happen to him at home? But there such a thing could not happen, and so there is no use in supposing an impossible case. At any rate I think I deserve sympathy. Who could keep his presence of mind under such circumstances? With us a young lady who loves one man can easily repel another suitor; but here it was very different, for how could I repel Layelah? Could I turn upon her and say "Unhand me?" Could I say "Away! I am another's?" Of course I couldn't; and what's worse, if I had said such things Layelah would have smiled me down into silence. The fact is, it doesn't do for women to take the initiative—it's not fair. I had stood a good deal among the Kosekin. Their love of darkness, their passion for death, their contempt of riches, their yearning after unrequited love, their human sacrifices, their cannibalism, all had more or less become familiar to me, and I had learned to acquiesce in silence; but now when it came to this—that a woman should propose to a man—it really was more than a fellow could stand. I felt this at that moment very forcibly; but then the worst of it was that Layelah was so confoundedly pretty, and had such a nice way with her, that hang me if I knew what to say.

Meanwhile Layelah was not silent; she had all her wits about her.

"Dear papa," said she, "would make such a nice husband for Almah. He is a widower, you know. I could easily persuade him to marry her. He always does whatever I ask him to do."

"But victims cannot marry, you said."

"No," said Layelah, sweetly, "they cannot marry one another; but Almah may marry dear papa, and then you and I can be married, and it will be all very nice indeed."

At this I started away.

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"No," said I, indignantly, "it won't be nice. I'm engaged to be married to Almah, and I'm not going to give her up."

"Oh, but she gives you up, you know," said Layelah, quietly.

"Well, but I'm not going to be given up."

"Why, how unreasonable you are, you foolish boy!" said Layelah, in her most caressing manner. "You have nothing at all to do with it."

At this I was in fresh despair, and then a new thought came, which I seized upon.

"See here," said I, "why can't I marry both of you? I'm engaged to Almah, and I love her better than all the world. Let me marry her and you too."

At this Layelah laughed long and merrily. Peal after peal of laughter, musical and most merry, burst from her. It was contagious; I could not help joining in, and so we both sat laughing. It was a long time before we regained our self-control.

"Why, that's downright bigamy!" exclaimed Layelah, with fresh laughter. "Why, Atam-or, you're mad!" and so she went off again in fresh peals of laughter. It was evident that my proposal was not at all shocking, but simply comical, ridiculous, and inconceivable in its absurdity. It was to her what the remark of some despairing beauty would be among us, who, when pressed by two lovers, should express a confused willingness to marry both. It was evident that Layelah accepted it as a ludicrous jest.

Laughter was all very well, of course; but I was serious and felt that I ought not to part with Layelah without some better understanding, and so I once more made an effort.

"All this," said I, in a mournful tone, "is a mere mockery. What have I to say about love and marriage?

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If you loved me as you say, you would not laugh, but weep. You forget what I am. What am I? A victim, and doomed—doomed to a hideous fate—a fate of horror unutterable. You cannot even begin to imagine the anguish with which I look forward to that fate which impends over me and Almah. Marriage—idle word! What have I to do with marriage? What has Almah? There is only one marriage before us—the dread marriage with death! Why talk of love to the dying? The tremendous ordeal, the sacrifice, is before us, and after that there remains the hideous *Mista Kosek!*"

At this Layelah sprang up, with her whole face and attitude full of life and energy.

"I know, I know," said she, quickly; "I have arranged for all. Your life shall be saved. Do you think that I have consented to your death? Never! You are mine. I will save you. I will show you what we can do. You shall escape."

"Can you really save me?" I cried.

"I can."

"What! in spite of the whole nation?"

Layelah laughed scornfully.

"I can save you," said she. "We can fly. There are other nations beside ours. We can find some land among the Gojin where we can live in peace. The Gojin are not like us."

"But Almah?" said I.

The face of Layelah clouded.

"I can only save you," said she.

"Then I will stay and die with Almah," said I, obstinately.

"What!" said Layelah, "do you not fear death?"

"Of course I do," said I, "but I'd rather die than lose Almah."

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"But it's impossible to save both of you."

"Then leave me and save Almah," said I.

"What! would you give up your life for Almah?"

"Yes, and a thousand lives," said I.

"Why," said Layelah, "now you talk just like the Kosekin. You might as well be one of us. You love death for the sake of Almah. Why not be more like the Kosekin, and seek after a separation from Almah?"

Layelah was not at all offended at my declaration of love for Almah. She uttered these words in a lively tone, and then said that it was time for her to go.

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CHAPTER XXI.

THE FLYING MONSTER.

I RETIRED to bed, but could not sleep. The offer of escape filled me with excited thoughts. These made sleep impossible, and as I lay awake I thought that perhaps it would be well to know what might be Layelah's plan of escape, for I might then make use of it to save Almah. I determined to find out all about it on the following *jom*—to question her as to the lands of the Gojin, to learn all her purpose. It might be that I could make use of that very plan to save Almah; but if not, why then I was resolved to remain and meet my fate with her. If Layelah could be induced to take both of us, I was of course resolved to go, trusting to chance as to the claims of Layelah upon me, and determined at all hazards to be faithful to Almah; but if she should positively refuse to save Almah, then I thought it possible that I might be able to find in Layelah's plan of escape something of which I might avail myself. I could not imagine what it was, but it seemed to me that it might be something quite feasible, especially for a desperate man. The only thought I had was of escape by means of some boat over the seas. In a boat I would be at home. I could make use of a sail so as to elude pursuit, and could guide myself by the stars. The only thing that I wanted to know was the situation of the lands of the Gojin.

On the following *jom* the Kohen Gadol and Layelah came quite early and spent much time. I was surprised

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to see the Kohen Gadol devoting himself in an absurd fashion to Almah. It at once occurred to me that Layelah had obtained her father's co-operation in her scheme, and that the old villain actually imagined that he could win the hand of Almah. To Almah herself I had said nothing whatever about the proposal of Layelah, so that she was quite ignorant of the intentions of her companion; but it was excessively annoying to me to see such proceedings going on under my own eyes. At the same time I felt that it would be both unwise and uncivil to interfere; and I was also quite sure that Almah's affections were not to be diverted from me by any one, much less by such an elderly party as the Kohen Gadol. It was very trying, however, and, in spite of my confidence in Almah, my jealousy was excited, and I began to think that the party of philosophical Radicals were not so agreeable as the orthodox cannibals whom I first met. As for Layelah, she seemed quite unconscious of any disturbance in my mind. She was as amiable, as sprightly, as inquisitive, and as affectionate as ever. She even outdid herself, and devoted herself to me with an abandon that was quite irresistible.

After Almah had left me Layelah came again, and this time she was alone.

"I have come," said she, "to show you the way in which we can escape, whenever you decide to do so."

It was the thing above all others which I wished to know, and therefore I questioned her eagerly about it; but to all of my questions she only replied that she would show me, and I might judge for myself.

Layelah led the way, and I followed her. We traversed long galleries and vast halls, all of which were quite empty. It was the sleeping-time, and only those were visible who had some duties which kept them up later than usual. Faint, twinkling lights but feebly

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illuminated the general gloom. At length we came to an immense cavern, which was darker than ever, and without any lamps at all. Through a vast portal, which was closed with a barred gateway, the beams of the brilliant aurora penetrated and disclosed something of the interior.

Here Layelah stopped and peered through the gloom, while I stood waiting by her side, wondering what means of escape could be found in this cavern. As I stood I heard through the still air the sound as of living things. For a time I saw nothing, but at length I descried a vast, shadowy form moving forward towards the portal where the darkness was less. It was a form of portentous size and fearful shape, and I could not make out at first the nature of it. It surpassed all that I had ever seen. Its head was large and its jaws long, armed with rows of terrible teeth, like those of a crocodile. Its body was of great size. It walked on its hind-legs, so as to maintain itself in an upright attitude, and in that position its height was over twelve feet. But the most amazing thing about this monster has yet to be told. As it walked its forearms waved and fluttered, and I saw descending from them what seemed like vast folded leathern wings, which shook and swayed in the air at every step. Its pace was about as fast as that of a man, and it moved with ease and lightness. It seemed like some enormous bat, or rather like a winged crocodile, or yet again like one of those monstrous dragons of which I had read, but in whose actual existence I had never believed. Yet here I saw one living and moving before me—an actual dragon, with the exception of a tail; for that appendage, which plays so great a part in all the pictures of dragons, had no place here. This beast had but a short caudal appendage, and all its terrors lay in its jaws and in its wings.

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For a moment I stood almost lifeless with terror and surprise. Then I shrank back, but Layelah laid her hand on my arm.

"Don't be afraid," said she; "it's only an athaleb."

"But won't it—won't it bite?" I asked, with a shudder.

"Oh, no," said Layelah, "it swallows its victuals whole."

At this I shrank away still farther.

"Don't be afraid," said Layelah again. "Its jaws are muzzled, and, besides, it's a tame athaleb. Its jaws are only unmuzzled at feeding-time. But this one is very tame. There are three or four others in here, and all as tame as I am. They all know me; come up nearer; don't be afraid. These athalebs are easily tamed."

"How can such tremendous monsters be tamed?" I asked, in an incredulous tone.

"Oh, man can tame anything. The athalebs are very docile when they are taken young. They are very long-lived. This one has been in service here for a hundred seasons and more."

At this I began to regain my confidence, and as Layelah moved nearer to the athaleb I accompanied her. A nearer view, however, was by no means reassuring. The dragon-look of the athaleb was stronger than ever, for I could see that all its body was covered with scales. On its neck and back was a long ridge of coarse hair, and the sweep of its vast arms was enormous. It was with a quaking heart that I stood near; but the coolness of Layelah reassured me, for she went close up, as a boy would go up to a tame elephant, and she stroked his enormous back, and the monster bent down his terrible head and seemed pleased.

"This," said Layelah, "is the way we have of escaping."

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"This!" I exclaimed, doubtfully.

"Yes," said she. "He is trained to the service. We can mount on his back, and he will fly with us where-ever I choose to guide him."

"What!" I exclaimed, as I shrank back—"fly! Do you mean to say that you will mount this hideous monster, and trust yourself to him?"

"Certainly," said Layelah, quietly; "he is very docile. There is harness here with which we can guide him. Should you like to see him harnessed?"

"Very much, indeed," said I.

Upon this Layelah walked up to the monster and stroked his breast. The huge athaleb at once lay down upon his bělly. Then she brought two long straps like reins, and fastened each to the tip of a projecting tip of each wing. Then she fastened a collar around his neck, to which there was attached a grappling-iron.

"We seat ourselves on his back," said Layelah. "I guide with these reins. When we land anywhere I fasten him with the grapple. He looks dull now, but if I were to open the gate and remove his muzzle he would be off like the wind."

"But can he carry both of us?" I asked.

"Easily," said Layelah. "He can carry three persons without fatigue."

"Could you mount on his back now, and show me how you sit?"

Layelah readily assented, and mounted with the greatest ease, seating herself on the broadest part of the back between the wings.

"Here," said she, "is room for you. Will you not come?"

For an instant I hesitated; but then the sight of her, seated there as coolly as though she were on a chair, reassured me, and I climbed up also, though not without

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"'THIS, SAID LAYELAH, 'IS THE WAY WE HAVE OF ESCAPING.'"

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a shudder. The touch of the fearful monster was abhorrent; but I conquered my disgust and seated myself close behind Layelah. There she sat, holding the reins in her hands, with the grapple just in front of her; and, seated in this position, she went on to explain the whole process by which the mighty monster was guided through the air.

No sooner had I found myself actually on the back of the athaleb than all fear left me. I perceived fully how completely tame he was, and how docile. The reins attached to his wings could be pulled with the greatest ease, just as one would pull the tiller-ropes of a boat. "Familiarity breeds contempt;" and now, since the first terror had passed away, I felt perfect confidence, and under the encouragement of Layelah I had become like some rustic in a menagerie, who at first is terrified by the sight of the elephant, but soon gains courage enough to mount upon his back. With my new-found courage and presence of mind, I listened most attentively to all of Layelah's explanations, and watched most closely the construction and fastening of the harness; for the thought had occurred to me that this athaleb might be of avail in another way—that if I did not fly with Layelah I might fly with Almah. This thought was only of a vague and shadowy character—a dim suggestion, the carrying out of which I scarce dared to think possible; still, it was in my mind, and had sufficient power over me to make me very curious as to the plans of Layelah. I determined to find out where she proposed to go, and how far; to ask her about the dangers of the way and the means of sustenance. It seemed, I confess, rather unfair to Layelah to find out her plans and use them for another purpose; but then that other purpose was Almah, and to me at that time every device which was for her safety seemed fair and honorable.

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"Here," said Layelah—"here, Atam-or, you see the way of escape. The athaleb can carry us both far away to a land where you need never fear that they will put you to death—a land where the people love light and life. Whenever you are ready to go, tell me; if you are ready to go now, say so, and at once I will open the door and we shall soon be far away."

She laid her hand on mine and looked at me earnestly; but I was not to be beguiled into any hasty committal of myself, and so I turned her proposal away with a question:

"How far is it," I asked, "to that land?"

"It is too far for one flight," said Layelah. "We go first over the sea till we come to a great island, which is called Magones, where there are mountains of fire; there we must rest, and feed the athaleb on fish, which are to be found on the shore. The athaleb knows his way there well, for he goes there once every season for a certain sacred ceremony. He has done this for fifty or sixty seasons, and knows his way there and back perfectly well. The difficulty will be, when we leave Magones, in reaching the land of the Orin."

"The Orin?" I repeated. "Who are they?"

"They are a people among the Gojin who love life and light. It is their land that I wish to reach, if possible."

"Where is it?" I asked, eagerly.

"I cannot explain," said Layelah. "I can only trust to my own skill, and hope to find the place. We may have to pass over different lands of the Gojin, and if so we may be in danger."

"What is the reason why the athaleb goes to Magones every season?" I asked.

"To take there the chief pauper of the season, who has won the prize of death by starvation. It is one of the greatest honors among the Kosekin."

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"Is Magones barren?"

"It is an island of fire, without anything on it but craggy mountains and wild rocks and flowing rivers of fire. It stands almost in the middle of the sea."

"How can we get away from here?" I asked, after some silence.

"From here? why, I open the gates and the athaleb flies away; that is all."

"But shall we not be prevented?"

"Oh, no. No one here ever prevents any one from doing anything. Every one is eager to help his neighbor."

"But if they saw me deliberately mounting the athaleb and preparing for flight, would they not stop me?"

"No."

I was amazed at this.

"But," said I, "am I not a victim—preserved for the great sacrifice?"

"You are; but you are free to go where you like, and do what you like. Your character of victim makes you most distinguished. It is the highest honor and dignity. All believe that you rejoice in your high dignity, and no one dreams that you are anxious to escape."

"But if I did escape, would they not pursue me?"

"Certainly not."

"What would they do for a victim?"

"They would wonder at your unaccountable flight, and then choose some distinguished pauper."

"But if I were to stay here, would they not save me from death at my entreaty?"

"Oh, certainly not; they would never understand such an entreaty. That's a question of death—the supreme blessing. No one is capable of such a base act as saving his fellow-man from death. All are eager to help each other to such a fate."

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"But if I were to fly they would not prevent me, and they would not pursue me?"

"Oh, no."

"Are there any in the land who are exempt from the sacrifice?"

"Oh, yes; the Athons, Meleks, and Kohens—these are not worthy of the honor. The artisans and tradesmen are sometimes permitted to attain to this honor; the laborers in greater numbers; but it is the paupers who are chiefly favored. And this is a matter of complaint among the rich and powerful, that they cannot be sacrificed."

"Well, why couldn't I be made an Athon or a Kohen, and be exempted in that way?"

"Oh, that would be too great a dishonor; it would be impossible. On the contrary, the whole people are anxious to honor you to the very uttermost, and to bestow upon you the greatest privileges and blessings which can possibly be given. Oh, no, it would be impossible for them to allow you to become an Athon or a Kohen. As for me, I am Malca, and therefore the lowest in the land—pitied and commiserated by the haughty pauper class, who shake their heads at the thought of one like me. All the people shower upon me incessantly new gifts and new offices. If my present love of light and life were generally known, they would punish me by giving me new contributions of wealth and new offices and powers, which I do not want."

"But you love riches, do you not? and you must want them still."

"No," said Layelah, "I do not want them now."

"Why, what do you want?" I asked.

"You!" said she, with a sweet smile.

I said nothing, but tried desperately to think of something that might divert the conversation.

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Layelah was silent for a few moments, and then went on in a musing tone.

"As I was saying, I love you, Atam-or, and I hate Almah because you love her. I think Almah is the only human being in all the world that I ever really hated; and yet, though I hate her, still, strange to say, I feel as though I should like to give her the immense blessing of death, and that is a very strange feeling, indeed, for one of the Kosekin. Do you understand, Atam-or, what such can possibly be?"

I did not answer, but turned away the conversation by a violent effort.

"Are there any other athalebs here?"

"Oh, yes."

"How many?"

"Four."

"Are they all as tame as this?"

"Oh, yes, all quite as tame; there is no difference whatever."

Upon this I left the back of the athaleb, and Layelah also descended, after which she proceeded to show me the other monsters. At length she unharnessed the athaleb, and we left the cavern.

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CHAPTER XXII.

ESCAPE.

On the following *jom* I told everything to Almah. I told her that Layelah was urging me to fly with her, and that I had found out all about her plans. I described the athalebs, informed her about the direction which we were to take, the island of fire, and the country of the Orin. At this intelligence Almah was filled with delight, and for the first time since we had come to the *amir* there were smiles of joy upon her face. She needed no persuasion. She was ready to set forth whenever it was fitting, and to risk everything upon this enterprise. She felt as I did, and thought that the wildest attempt was better than this dull inaction.

Death was before us here, and every *jom* as it passed only brought it nearer. True, we were treated with the utmost kindness, we lived in royal splendor, we had enormous retinues; but all this was a miserable mockery, since it all served as the prelude to our inevitable doom. For that doom it was hard indeed to wait. Anything was better. Far better would it be to risk all the dangers of this unusual and amazing flight, to brave the terrors of that drear isle of fire, Magones; better to perish there of starvation, or to be killed by the hands of hostile Gojin, than to wait here and be destroyed at last by the sacrificial knife of these smiling, generous, kind-hearted, self-sacrificing fiends; to be killed—ay, and afterwards borne to the tremendous *Mista Kosek.*

There was a difficulty with Layelah that had to be

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guarded against: in the first place that she might not suspect, and again that we might choose our time of escape when she would not be at all likely to find us out. We resolved to make our attempt without any further delay. Layelah was with us for the greater part of that *jom*, and the Kohen Gadol also gave us much of his company. Layelah did not seem to have any suspicions whatever of my secret purpose; for she was as bright, as amiable, and as devoted to me as ever, while the Kohen Gadol sought as before to make himself agreeable to Almah. I did not think fit to tell her about Layelah's proposal, and therefore she was quite ignorant of the secret plans of the Kohen Gadol, evidently attributing his attention to the unfailing amiability of the Kosekin.

Layelah came again after Almah had retired, and spent the time in trying to persuade me to fly with her. The beautiful girl was certainly never more engaging, nor was she ever more tender. Had it not been for Almah it would have been impossible to resist such sweet persuasions; but as it was I did resist. Layelah, however, was not at all discouraged, nor did she lose any of her amiability; but when she took leave it was with a smile and sweet words of forgiveness on her lips for what she called my cruelty. After she left I remained for a time with a painful sense of helplessness. The fact is my European training did not fit me for encountering such a state of things as existed among the Kosekin. It's very easy to be faithful to one's own true-love in England, when other fair ladies hold aloof and wait to be sought; but here among the Kosekin women have as much liberty in making love as men, and there is no law or custom about it. If a woman chooses she can pay the most desperate attentions, and play the part of a distracted lover to her heart's content. In most cases

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the women actually take the initiative, as they are more impressible and impulsive than men; and so it was that Layelah made me the object of her persistent assault—acting all the time, too, in accordance with the custom of the country, and thus having no thought whatever of indelicacy, since, according to the Kosekin, she was acting simply in accordance with the rights of every woman. Now, where a woman is urged by one ardent lover to dismiss her other lover, she may sometimes find it difficult to play her part satisfactorily; but in my case I did not play my part satisfactorily at all; the ordeal was too hard, and I was utterly unable to show to Layelah that firmness and decision of character which the occasion demanded.

Yet, after all, the ordeal at last ended. Layelah left. as I have said, with sweet words of forgiveness on her lips, and I, after a time, succeeded in regaining my presence of mind.

Almah was waiting, and she soon joined me. We gathered a few articles for the journey, the chief of which was my rifle and pistol, which I had not used here, and then we set forth. Leaving our apartments, we traversed the long passages, and at length came to the cavern of the athalebs. We met several people on the way, who looked at us with smiles, but made no other sign. It was evident that they had no commission to watch us, and thus far Layelah's information was correct.

Upon entering the cavern of the athalebs my first feeling was one of helplessness; for I had no confidence whatever in my own powers of managing these awful monsters, nor did I feel sure that I could harness them: but the emergency was a pressing one, and there was no help for it. I had seen where Layelah had left the harness, and now my chief desire was to secure one of the

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athalebs. The faint light served to disclose nothing but gloom; and I waited for a while, hoping that one of them would come forward as before. But waiting did no good, for no movement was made, and I had to try what I could do myself to rouse them. So I walked farther in towards the back part of the cavern, peering through the gloom, while Almah remained near the entrance.

As I advanced I heard a slight noise, as of some one moving. I thought it was one of the athalebs, and walked on farther, peering through the gloom, when suddenly I came full upon a man who was busy at some work which I could not make out. For a moment I stood in amazement and despair, for it seemed as though all was lost, and as if this man would at once divine my intent. While I stood thus he turned and gave me a very courteous greeting, after which, in the usual manner of the Kosekin, he asked me with much amiability what he could do for me. I muttered something about seeing the athalebs, upon which he informed me that he would show them to me with pleasure.

He went on to say that he had recently been raised from the low position of Athon to that of Feeder of the Athalebs, a post involving duties like those of ostlers or grooms among us, but which here indicated high rank and honor. He was proud of his title of "Epet," which means servant, and more than usually obliging. I at once took advantage of his complaisance, and requested him to show me the athalebs. Upon this he led the way farther on, where I could see through the gloom the shadowy outlines of four monsters, all of which were resting in an upright posture against the wall, with their claws fixed on a shelf of rock. They looked more than ever like dragons, or rather like enormous bats, for their wings were disclosed hanging in loose leathern folds.

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"Can they be roused," I asked, "and made to move?"

"Oh, yes," said the Epet, and without waiting for any further request he proceeded to pull at the loose fanlike wing of the nearest one. The monster drew himself together, gave a flutter with his wings, and then moved back from the wall.

"Make him walk," said I, eagerly.

The Epet at this pulled upon his wing once more, and the athaleb moved forward.

"Bring him to the portal, so that I may see him," said I.

The Epet, still holding the athaleb's wing, pulled at him, and thus guided him towards the portal. I was amazed at the docility of this terrific monster; yet, after all, I thought it was no more astonishing than the docility of the elephant, which in like manner allows itself to be guided by the slightest pressure. A child may lead a vast elephant with ease, and here with equal ease the Epet led the athaleb. He led him up near to the portal, where the aurora light beamed through far brighter than the brightest moon and disclosed all the vast proportions of the monster. I stood and looked on for some time in silence, quite at a loss what to do next.

And now Layelah's words occurred to me as to the perfect willingness of the Kosekin to do anything which one might wish. She had insisted on it that they would not prevent our flight, and had given me to understand that they would even assist me if I should ask them. This is what now occurred to me, and I determined to make a trial. So I said,

"I should like to fly in the air on the athaleb. Will you harness him?"

I confess it was with some trepidation that I said this, but the feeling was soon dissipated. The Epet heard

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my words with perfect coolness, as though they conveyed the most natural request in the world, and then proceeded to obey me, just as at home a servant might hear and obey his master, who might say, "I should like to take a ride; will you harness the bay mare?"

So the Epet proceeded to harness the athaleb, and I watched him in silence; but it was the silence of deep suspense, and my heart throbbed painfully. There was yet much to be risked. The gates had to be opened. Others might interfere. Layelah might come. All these thoughts occurred to me as I watched the Epet; and though the labor of harnessing the athaleb was simple and soon performed, still the time seemed long. So the collar was secured around the neck of the athaleb, with the grapple attached, and the lines were fastened to the wings, and then Almah and I mounted.

The Epet now stood waiting for further orders.

"Open the gates," said I.

The Epet did so.

Almah was seated on the back of the athaleb before me, holding on to the coarse mane; I, just behind, held the reins in my hand. The gates were opened wide. A few people outside, roused by the noise of the opening gates, stood and looked on. They had evidently no other feeling but curiosity.

All was now ready and the way was open, but there was an unexpected difficulty—the athaleb would not start, and I did not know how to make him. I had once more to apply for help to the Epet.

"How am I to make him start?" I asked.

"Pull at the collar to make him start, and pull at both reins to make him stop," said the Epet.

Upon this I pulled the collar.

The athaleb obeyed at once. He rose almost erect, and moved out through the gate. It was difficult to

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hold on, but we did so. On reaching the terrace outside the athaleb expanded his vast wings, which spread out over a space of full fifty feet, and then with vigorous motions raised himself in the air.

It was a moment full of terror to both of us; the strange sensation of rising in the air, the quivering muscles of the athaleb at the working of the enormous pinions, the tremendous display of strength, all combined to overwhelm me with a sense of utter helplessness. With one hand I clung to the stiff mane of the monster; with the other I held Almah, who was also grasping the athaleb's hair; and thus for some time all thought was taken up in the one purpose of holding on. But at length the athaleb lay in the air in a perfectly horizontal position; the beat of the wings grew more slow and even, the muscular exertion more steady and sustained. We both began to regain some degree of confidence, and at length I raised myself up and looked around.

It did not seem long since we had left; but already the city was far behind, rising with its long, crescent terraces, sparkling and twinkling with innumerable lights. We had passed beyond the bay; the harbor was behind us, the open sea before us, the deep water beneath. The athaleb flew low, not more than a hundred feet above the water, and maintained that distance all the time. It seemed, indeed, as if he might drop into the water at any time, but this was only fancy; for he was perfect master of all his movements, and his flight was swift and well sustained.

Overhead the sky was filled with the glory of the aurora beams, which spread everywhere, flashing out from the zenith and illuminating the earth with a glow brighter than that of the brightest moon; beneath, the dark waters of the sea extended, with the waves breaking into foam, and traversed by galleys, by merchant-ships,

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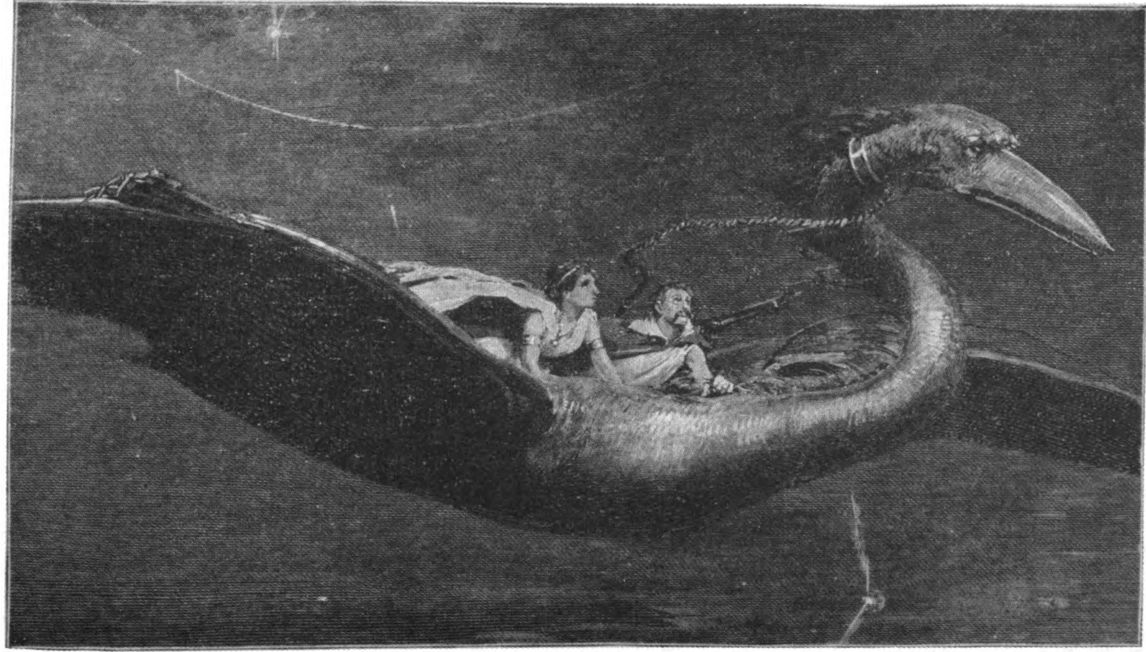

"WITH ONE HAND I CLUNG TO THE STIFF MANE OF THE MONSTER; WITH THE OTHER I HELD ALMAH."

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and by the navies of the Kosekin. Far away the surface of the sea spread, with that marvellous appearance of an endless ascent, as though for a thousand miles, rising thus until it terminated half-way up the sky; and so it rose up on every side, so that I seemed to be at the bottom of a basin-shaped world—an immense and immeasurable hollow—a world unparalleled and unintelligible. Far away, at almost infinite distances, arose the long lines of mountains, which, crowned with ice, gleamed in the aurora light, and seemed like a barrier that made forever impossible all ingress and egress.

On and on we sped. At length we grew perfectly accustomed to the situation, the motion was so easy and our seats were so secure. There were no obstacles in our way, no roughness along our path; for that pathway was the smooth air, and in such a path there could be no interruption, no jerk or jar. After the first terror had passed there remained no longer any necessity for holding on—we could sit and look around with perfect freedom; and at length I rose to my feet, and Almah stood beside me, and thus we stood for a long time, with all our souls kindled into glowing enthusiasm by the excitement of that adventurous flight, and the splendors of that unequalled scene.

At length the aurora light grew dim. Then came forth the stars, glowing and burning in the black sky. Beneath there was nothing visible but the darkness of the water, spotted with phosphorescent points, while all around a wall of gloom arose which shut out from view the distant shores.

Suddenly I was aware of a noise like the beat of vast wings, and these wings were not those of our athaleb. At first I thought it was the fluttering of a sail, but it was too regular and too long continued for that. At length I saw through the gloom a vast shadowy form in

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the air behind us, and at once the knowledge of the truth flashed upon me. It was another monster flying in pursuit!

Were we pursued? Were there men on his back? Should I resist? I held my rifle poised, and was resolved to resist at all hazards. Almah saw it all, and said nothing. She perceived the danger, and in her eyes I saw that she, like me, would prefer death to surrender. The monster came nearer and nearer, until at last I could see that he was alone, and that none were on his back. But now another fear arose. He might attack our athaleb, and in that way endanger us. He must be prevented from coming nearer; yet to fire the rifle was a serious matter. I had once before learned the danger of firing under such circumstances, when my opmahera had fled in terror at the report, and did not wish to experience the danger which might arise from a panic-stricken athaleb; and so as I stood there I waved my arms and gesticulated violently. The pursuing athaleb seemed frightened at such an unusual occurrence, for he veered off, and soon was lost in the darkness.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ISLAND OF FIRE.

At last there appeared before us what seemed like a long line of dull-red fires, and as we looked we could see bursts of flame at fitful intervals, which shone out for a few moments and then died away. Upon this now our whole attention was fixed; for it seemed as though we were approaching our destination, and that this place was the Island of Fire—a name which, from present appearances, was fully justified. As we went on and drew steadily nearer, the mass of glowing fire grew larger and brighter, and what at first had seemed a line was broken up into different parts, one of which far surpassed the others. This was higher in the air, and its shape was that of a long, thin, sloping line, with a burning, glowing globule at each end. It seemed like lava raining down from the crater of a volcano, and this appearance was made certainty on a nearer approach; for we saw at the upper point, which seemed the crater, an outburst of flame, followed by a new flow of the fiery stream. In other places there were similar fires, but they were less bright, either because they were smaller or more remote.

At length we heard beneath us the roar of breakers, and saw long white lines of surf beating upon the shore. Our athaleb now descended and alighted; we clambered to the ground, and I, taking the grapple, fixed it securely between two sharp rocks. We were at last on Magones, the Island of Fire.

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The brightness of the aurora light had left us, but it needed not this to show us the dismal nature of the land to which we had come. It was a land of horror, where there was nothing but the abomination of desolation—a land overstrewn with blasted fragments of fractured lava-blocks, intermixed with sand, from which there arose black precipices and giant mountains that poured forth rivers of fire and showers of ashes and sheets of flame. A tremendous peak arose before us, with a crest of fire and sides streaked with red torrents of molten lava; between us and it there spread away a vast expanse of impassable rocks—a scene of ruin and savage wildness which cannot be described, and all around was the same drear and appalling prospect. Here in the night-season—the season of darkness and of awful gloom—we stood in this land of woe; and not one single sign appeared of life save the life that we had brought with us. As for food, it was vain to think of it. To search after it would be useless. It seemed, indeed, impossible to move from the spot where we were. Every moment presented some new discovery which added to the horror of Magones.

But Almah was weary, for our flight had been long, and she wished to rest. So I found a place for her where there was some sand between two rocks, and here she lay down and went to sleep. I sat at a little distance off on a shelf of the rock, with my back against it, and here after a little time I also went to sleep.

At length we awoke. But what a waking! There was no morning dawn, no blessed returning light to greet our eyes. We opened our eyes to the same scenes upon which we had closed them, and the darkness was still deep and dense around us. Over us both there was a sense of utter depression, and I was so deeply plunged into it that I found it impossible to rouse myself, even

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"ALMAH LAY DOWN UPON THE SAND, AND I SEATED MYSELF, LEANING AGAINST A ROCK, A LITTLE DISTANCE OFF."

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for the sake of saying words of cheer to Almah. I had brought a few fragments of food, and upon these we made our breakfast; but there was the athaleb to feed, and for him I found nothing, nor could I think of anything—unless he could feed upon rocks and sand. Yet food for him was a matter of the highest consequence, for he was all our support and stay and hope; and if the monster were deprived of food he might turn upon us and satisfy upon us his ravenous appetite. These thoughts were painful, indeed, and added to my despondency.

Suddenly I heard the sound of running water. I started away towards the place from which the sound came, and found, only a little distance off, a small brook trickling along on its way to the shore. I called Almah, and we both drank and were refreshed.

This showed an easy way to get to the shore, and I determined to go there to see if there were any fish to be found. Shell-fish might be there, or the carcasses of dead fish thrown up by the sea, upon which the athaleb might feed. I left my pistol with Almah, telling her to fire it if she heard me fire, for I was afraid of losing my way, and therefore took this precaution. I left it lying on the rock full-cocked, and directed her to point it in the air and pull the trigger. It was necessary to take these precautions, as of course she was quite ignorant of its nature. After this I left her and tried to follow the torrent.

This, however, I soon found to be impossible, for the brook on reaching a huge rock plunged underneath it and became lost to view. I then went towards the shore as well as I could—now climbing over sharp rocks, now going round them, until at length after immense labor I succeeded in reaching the water. Here the scene was almost as wild as the one I had left. There was no

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beach whatever—nothing but a vast extent of wild fragments of fractured lava-blocks, which were evidently the result of some comparatively recent convulsion of nature, for their edges were still sharp, and the water had not worn even those which were within its grasp to anything like roundness, or to anything else than the jagged and shattered outlines which had originally belonged to them.

All the shore thus consisted of vast rocky blocks, over which the sea beat in foam.

Eager to find something, I toiled along this rocky shore for a long distance, but without seeing any change. I was unwilling to go back baffled, yet I was at length compelled to do so. But the necessity of feeding the athaleb was pressing, and I saw that our only course now would be to mount him again, leave this place, and seek some other. But where could we go? That I could not imagine, and could only conclude to trust altogether to the instinct of the athaleb, which might guide him to places where he might obtain food. Such a course would involve great risk, for we might be carried into the midst of vast flocks of these monsters; yet there was nothing else to be done.

I now retraced my steps, and went for a long time near the sea. At length I found a place where the walking was somewhat easier, and went in this way up into the island and away from the sea. It seemed to lead in the direction where I wished to go. At length it seemed as if I had walked far enough, yet I could see no signs of Almah. I shouted, but there was no answer. I shouted again and again, but with the like result. Then I fired my rifle and listened. In response there came the report of the pistol far away behind me. It was evident that in coming back along the shore I had passed by the place where Almah was. There was noth-

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ing now left but to retrace my steps, and this I accordingly did. I went back to the shore, and returned on my steps, shouting all the time, until at length I was rejoiced to hear the answering shout of Almah. After this it was easy to reach her.

We now took up the grapple and once more mounted. The athaleb, eager to be off, raised himself quickly in the air, and soon our late resting-place was far behind. His flight was now different from what it was before. Then he stood off in one straight line for a certain fixed destination, as though under some guidance; for though I did not direct him, still his long training had taught him to fly to Magones. But now training and guidance were both wanting, and the athaleb was left to the impulse of his hunger and the guidance of his instinct; so he flew no longer in one undeviating straight line, but rose high, and bent his head down low, and flew and soared in vast circles, even as I have seen a vulture or a condor sweeping about while searching for food. All the while we were drawing farther and farther away from the spot which we had left.

We passed the lofty volcano; we saw more plainly the rivers of molten lava; we passed vast cliffs and bleak mountains, all of which were more terrific than all that we had left behind. Now the darkness lessened, for the aurora was brightening in the sky, and gathering up swiftly and gloriously all its innumerable beams, and flashing forth its lustrous glow upon the world. To us this was equal to the return of day; it was like a blessed dawn. Light had come, and we rejoiced and were exceeding glad.

Now we saw before us, far beyond the black precipices, a broad bay with sloping shores, and a wide beach which seemed like a beach of sand. The surf broke here, but beyond the surf was the gentle sandy decliv-

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ity, and beyond this there appeared the shores, still rocky and barren and desolate, but far preferable to what we had left behind. Far away in the interior arose lofty mountains and volcanoes, while behind us flamed the burning peak which we had passed.

Here the athaleb wheeled in long, circuitous flights, which grew lower and lower, until at length he descended upon the sandy beach, where I saw a vast sea-monster lying dead. It had evidently been thrown up here by the sea. It was like one of those monsters which I had seen from the galley of the Kohen at the time of the sacred hunt. By this the athaleb descended, and at once began to devour it, tearing out vast masses of flesh, and exhibiting such voracity and strength of jaw that I could scarcely bear to look upon the sight. I fastened the grapple securely to the head of the dead monster, and, leaving the athaleb to feed upon it, Almah and I went up the beach.

On our way we found rocks covered with sea-weed, and here we sought after shell-fish. Our search was at length rewarded, for suddenly I stumbled upon a place where I found some lobsters. I grasped two of these, but the others escaped. Here at last I had found signs of life, but they were of the sea rather than of the shore. Delighted with my prey, I hastened to Almah to show them to her. She recognized them at once, and I saw that they were familiar to her. I then spoke of eating them, but at this proposal she recoiled in horror. She could not give any reason for her repugnance, but merely said that among her people they were regarded as something equivalent to vermin, and I found that she would no more think of eating one than I would think of eating a rat. Upon this I had to throw them away, and we once more resumed our search.

At last we came to a place where numbers of dead

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fish lay on the sand. Nearer the water they were more fresh, and not at all objectionable. I picked up a few which looked like our common smelt, and found that Almah had no objection to these. But now the question arose how to cook them; neither of us could eat them raw. A fire was necessary, yet a fire was impossible; for on the whole island there was probably not one single combustible thing. Our discovery, therefore, seemed to have done us but little good, and we seemed destined to starvation, when fortunately a happy thought suggested itself. In walking along I saw far away the glow of some lava which had flowed to the shore at the end of the sandy beach, and was probably cooling down at the water's edge. Here, then, was a natural fire, which might serve us better than any contrivance of our own, and towards this we at once proceeded. It was about two miles away; but the beach was smooth, and we reached the place without any difficulty.

Here we found the edge of that lava flood which seemed eternally descending from the crater beyond. The edge which was nearest the water was black; and the liquid fire, as it rolled down, curled over this in a fantastic shape, cooling and hardening into the form which it thus assumed. Here, after some search, I found a crevice where I could approach the fire, and I laid the fish upon a crimson rock, which was cooling and hardening into the shape of a vast ledge of lava. In this way, by the aid of nature, the fish were broiled, and we made our repast.

There was nothing here to invite a longer stay, and we soon returned to the athaleb. We found the monster, gorged with food, asleep, resting upon his hind-legs, with his breast supported against the vast carcass. Almah called it a *jantannin.* It was about sixty feet in length and twenty in thickness, with a vast horny head,

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ponderous jaws, and back covered with scales. Its eyes were of prodigious size, and it had the appearance of a crocodile, with the vast size of a whale. It was unlike a crocodile, however; for it had fins rather than paws, and must have been as clumsy on the land as a seal or a walrus. It lay on its side, and the athaleb had fed itself from the uncovered flesh of its belly.

There was nothing here to induce us to stay, and so we wandered along the beach in the other direction. On our right was the bay; on our left the rocky shore, which, beginning at the beach, ran back into the country, a waste of impassable rocks, where not a tree or plant or blade of grass relieved the appalling desolation. Once or twice we made an attempt to penetrate into the country, where openings appeared. These openings seemed like the beds of dried-up torrents. We were able to walk but a few paces, for invariably we would come to some immense blocks of rock, which barred all farther progress. In this way we explored the beach for miles until it terminated in a savage promontory that rose abruptly from the sea, against which the huge billows broke in thunder.

Then we retraced our steps, and again reached the spot where the athaleb was asleep by the jantannin. Almah was now too weary to walk any farther, nor was it desirable to do so; for, indeed, we had traversed all that could be visited. On one side of the beach was the sea, on the other the impassable rocks; at one end the promontory, at the other the lava fires. There was nothing more for us to do but to wait here until the athaleb should awake, and then our actions would depend upon what we might now decide.

This was the question that was now before us, and this we began to consider. We both felt the most unspeakable aversion for the island, and to remain here any

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longer was impossible. We would once more have to mount the athaleb, and proceed to some other shore. But where? Ah! there was the question. Not on the island, for it did not seem possible that in all its extent there could be one single spot capable of affording a resting-place. Layelah's information in regard to Magones had made that much plain. I had not taken in her full meaning, but now mine eyes had seen it. Yet where else could we go? Almah could not tell where under the sky lay that land which she loved; I could not guess where to go to find the land of the Orin. Even if I did know, I did not feel able to guide the course of the athaleb; and I felt sure that if we were to mount again, the mighty monster would wing his flight back again to the very place from which we had escaped —the *amir*. These thoughts weighed down our spirits. We felt that we had gained nothing by our flight, and that our future was dark indeed. The only hope left us was that we might be able to guide the course of the athaleb in some different direction altogether, so that we should not be carried back to the Kosekin.

And now, worn out by the long fatigues of this *jom*, we thought of sleep. Almah laid down upon the sand, and I seated myself, leaning against a rock, a little distance off, having first reloaded my rifle and pistol.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

RECAPTURE.

How long I slept I do not know; but in the midst of my sleep there sounded voices, which at first intermingled themselves with my dreams, but gradually became separate and sounded from without, rousing me from my slumbers. I opened my eyes drowsily, but the sight that I saw was so amazing that in an instant all sleep left me. I started to my feet, and gazed in utter bewilderment upon the scene before me.

The aurora light was shining with unusual brilliancy, and disclosed everything—the sea, the shore, the athaleb, the jantannin, the promontory, all — more plainly and more luminously than before; but it was not any of these things that now excited my attention and rendered me dumb. I saw Almah standing there at a little distance, with despairing face, surrounded by a band of armed Kosekin; while immediately before me, regarding me with a keen glance and an air of triumph, was Layelah.

"*Atœsmzori alonla*," said she, with a sweet smile, giving me the usual salutation of the Kosekin.

I was too bewildered to say a word, and stood mute as before, looking first at her and then at Almah.

The sight of Almah a prisoner once more, surrounded by the Kosekin, excited me to madness. I seized my rifle, and raised it as if to take aim, but Almah, who understood the movement, cried to me:

"Put down your *sepet-ram*, Atam-or! you can do nothing for me. The Kosekin are too numerous."

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"*Sepet-ram!*" said Layelah; "what do mean by that? If your *sepet-ram* has any power do not try to use it, or else I shall have to order my followers to give to Almah the blessing of death."

At this my rifle was lowered: the whole truth flashed upon me, and I saw, too, the madness of resistance. I might kill one or two; but the rest would do as Layelah said, and I should speedily be disarmed. Well I knew how powerless were the thunders of my fire-arms to terrify these Kosekin; for the prospect of death would only rouse them to a mad enthusiasm, and they would all rush upon me as they would rush upon a jantannin—to slay and be slain. The odds were too great. A crowd of Europeans could be held in check far more easily than these death-loving Kosekin. The whole truth was thus plain: we were prisoners, and were at their mercy.

Layelah showed no excitement or anger whatever. She looked and spoke in her usual gracious and amiable fashion, with a sweet smile on her face.

"We knew," said she, "that you would be in distress in this desolate place, and that you would not know where to go from Magones; and so we have come, full of the most eager desire to relieve your wants. We have brought with us food and drink, and are ready to do everything for you that you may desire. We have had great trouble in finding you, and have coursed over the shores for vast distances, and far over the interior, but our athalebs found you at last by their scent. And we rejoice to have found you in time, and that you are both so well, for we have been afraid that you have been suffering. Nay, Atam-or, do not thank us, thanks are distasteful to the Kosekin: these brave followers of mine will all be amply rewarded for this, for they will all be made paupers; but as for myself, I want no higher reward than the delightful thought that I have saved you from suffering."

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The beautiful, smiling Layelah, who addressed me in this way with her sweet voice, was certainly not to be treated as an enemy. Against her a rifle could not be levelled; she would have looked at me with the same sweet smile, and that smile would have melted all my resolution. Nor could I even persist in my determination to remain. Remain! For what? For utter despair! And yet where else could we go?

"You do not know where lie the lands of the Orin," said Layelah. "The athaleb does not know. You could not guide him if you did know. You are helpless on his back. The art of driving an athaleb is difficult, and cannot be learned without long and severe practice. My fear was that the athaleb might break away from you and return, leaving you to perish here. Had you tried to leave this place he would have brought you back to the *amir*."

To this I said nothing—partly because it was so true that I had no answer to make, and partly also out of deep mortification and dejection. My pride was wounded at being thus so easily baffled by a girl like Layelah, and all my grief was stirred by the sadness of Almah. In her eyes there seemed even now the look of one who sees death inevitable, and the glance she gave to me was like an eternal farewell.

Almah now spoke, addressing herself to Layelah.

"Death," said she, in a voice of indescribable mournfulness, "is better here than with you. We would rather die here than go back. Let us, I pray you, receive the blessing of death here. Let us be paupers and exiles, and die on Magones."

Layelah heard this and stood for a moment in deep thought.

"No one but a stranger," said she, at length, "would ask such a favor as that. Do you not know that what

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you ask is among the very highest honors of the Kosekin? Who am I that I can venture to grant such a request as that? Ask for anything in my power, and I will be glad to grant it. I have already arranged that you shall be separated from Atam-or; and that, surely, is a high privilege. I might consent to bind you hand and foot, after the manner of the most distinguished *Asirin;* you may also be blindfolded if you wish it. I might even promise, after we return to the *amir*, to keep you confined in utter darkness, with barely sufficient food to keep you alive until the time of the sacrifice; in short, there is no blessing known among the Kosekin that I will not give so long as it is in my power. And so, beloved Almah," continued Layelah, "you have every reason for happiness; you have all the highest blessings known among the Kosekin: separation from your lover, poverty, want, darkness; and, finally, the prospect of inevitable death ever before you as the crowning glory of your lot."

These words seemed to the Kosekin the very excess of magnanimity, and involuntary murmurs of admiration escaped them; although it is just possible that they murmured at the greatness of the favor that was offered. But to me it sounded like fiendish mockery, and to Almah it sounded the same; for a groan escaped her, her fortitude gave way, she sank on her knees, buried her head in her hands, and wept.

"Almah," cried I, in a fury, "we will not go back—we will not be separated! I will destroy all the athalebs, and we shall all perish here together. At least, you and I will not be separated."

At this Almah started up.

"No, no," said she—"no; let us go back. Here we have nothing but death."

"But we have death also at the *amir*, and a more terrible one," said I.

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"If you kill the athalebs," said Layelah, "I will give Almah the blessing of death."

At this I recoiled in horror, and my resolution again gave way.

"You have some mysterious power of conferring death," continued Layelah, "with what Almah calls your *sepet-ram;* but do not kill the athalebs, for it will do you no good. Almah would then receive the blessing of death. My followers, these noble Kosekin, would rejoice in thus gaining exile and death on Magones. As for myself, it would be my highest happiness to be here alone with you. With you I should live for a few sweet *joms,* and with you I should die; so go on—kill the athalebs if you wish."

"Do not!" cried Almah—"do not! There is no hope. We are their prisoners, and our only hope is in submission."

Upon this all further thought of resistance left me, and I stood in silence, stolidly waiting for their action. As I looked around I noticed a movement near the jantannin, and saw several athalebs there which were devouring its flesh. I now went over to Almah and spoke to her. We were both full of despair. It seemed as though we might never meet again. We were to be separated now; but who could say whether we should be permitted to see each other after leaving this place. We had but little to say. I held her in my arms, regardless of the presence of others; and these, seeing our emotion, at once moved away, with the usual delicacy of the Kosekin, and followed Layelah to the jantannin to see about the athalebs.

At last our interview was terminated. Layelah came and informed us that all was ready for our departure. We walked sadly to the place, and found the athalebs crouched to receive their riders. There were four be-

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sides ours. Layelah informed me that I was to go with her, and Almah was to go on another athaleb. I entreated her to let Almah go with me; but she declined, saying that our athaleb could only carry two, as he seemed fatigued, and it would not be safe to overload him for so long a flight. I told her that Almah and I could go together on the same athaleb; but she objected on the ground of my ignorance of driving. And so, remonstrances and objections being alike useless, I was compelled to yield to the arrangements that had been made. Almah mounted on another athaleb. I mounted with Layelah, and then the great monsters expanded their mighty wings, rose into the air, and soon were speeding over the waters.

We went on in silence for some time. I was too despondent to say a word, and all my thoughts turned towards Almah, who was now separated from me—perhaps forever. The other athalebs went ahead, at long intervals apart, flying in a straight line, while ours was last. Layelah said nothing. She sat in front of me; her back was turned towards me; she held in her hands the reins, which hung quite loose at first, but after a while she drew them up, and seemed to be directing our course. For some time I did not notice anything in particular, for my eyes were fixed upon the athaleb immediately before us, upon which was seated the loved form of Almah, which I could easily recognize. But our athaleb flew slowly, and I noticed that we were falling behind. I said this to Layelah, but she only remarked that it was fatigued with its long journey. To this I objected that the others had made as long a journey, and insisted that she should draw nearer. This she at first refused to do; but at length, as I grew persistent, she complied, or pretended to do so. In spite of this, however, we again fell behind, and I noticed that this always

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happened when the reins were drawn tight. On making this discovery I suddenly seized both reins and let them trail loose, whereupon the athaleb at once showed a perceptible increase of speed, which proved that there was no fatigue in him whatever. This I said to Layelah.

She acquiesced with a sweet smile, and, taking the reins again, she sat around so as to face me, and said,

"You are very quick. It is no use to try to deceive you, Atam-or: I wish to fall behind."

"Why?"

"To save you?"

"To save me?"

"Yes. I can take you to the land of the Orin. Now is the time to escape from death. If you go back you must surely die; but now, if you will be guided by me, I can take you to the land of the Orin. There they all hate death; they love life; they live in the light. There you will find those who are like yourself; there you can love and be happy."

"But what of Almah?" I asked.

Layelah made a pretty gesture of despair.

"You are always talking of Almah," said she. "What is Almah to you? She is cold, dull, sad! She never will speak. Let her go."

"Never!" said I. "Almah is worth more than all the world to me."

Layelah sighed.

"I can never, never, never," said she, "get from you the least little bit of a kind word—even after all that I have done for you, and when you know that I would lie down and let you trample me under your feet if it gave you any pleasure."

"Oh, that is not the question at all," said I. "You are asking me to leave Almah—to be false to her—and I cannot."

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"Among the Kosekin," said Layelah, "it is the highest happiness for lovers to give one another up."

"I am not one of the Kosekin," said I. "I cannot let her go away—I cannot let her go back to the *amir*—to meet death alone. If she dies she shall see me by her side, ready to die with her."

At this Layelah laughed merrily.

"Is it possible," said she, "that you believe that? Do you not know that if Almah goes back alone she will not die!"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, she can only die when you are in her company. She has lived for years among us, and we have waited for some one to appear whom she might love, so that we might give them both the blessing of death. If that one should leave her Almah could not receive the blessing. She would be compelled to live longer, until some other lover should appear. Now, by going with me to the land of the Orin you will save Almah's life—and as for Almah, why she will be happy—and dear papa is quite willing to marry her. You must see, therefore, dear Atam-or, that my plan is the very best that can be thought of for all of us, and, above all, for Almah."

This, however, was intolerable; and I could not consent to desert Almah, even if, by doing so, I should save her life. My own nature revolted from it. Still, it was not a thing which I could dismiss on the instant. The safety of Almah's life indeed required consideration; but then the thought came of her wonder at my desertion. Would she not think me false? Would not the thought of my falsity be worse than death?

"No," said I; "I will not leave her—not even to save her life. Even among us there are things worse than death. Almah would rather die by the sacrificial knife than linger on with a broken heart."

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"Oh, no," said Layelah, sweetly; "she will rejoice that you are safe. Do you not see that while you are together death is inevitable, but if you separate you may both live and be happy?"

"But she will think me dead," said I, as a new idea occurred. "She will think that some accident has befallen me."

"Oh, no she won't," said Layelah; "she will think that you have gone off with me."

"Then that will be worse, and I would rather die, and have her die with me, than live and have her think me false."

"You are very, very obstinate," said Layelah, sweetly.

I made no reply. During this conversation I had been too intent upon Layelah's words to notice the athalebs before me; but now, as I looked up, I saw that we had fallen far behind, and that Layelah had headed our athaleb in a new direction. Upon this I once more snatched the reins from her, and tried to return to our former course. This, however, I was utterly unable to do.

Layelah laughed.

"You will have to let me guide our course," said she. "You can do nothing. The athaleb will now go in a straight line to the land of the Orin."

Upon this I started up in wild excitement.

"Never, never, never!" I cried, in a fury. "I will not; I will destroy this athaleb and perish in the water!"

As I said this I raised my rifle.

"What are you going to do?" cried Layelah, in accents of fear.

"Turn back," I cried, "or I will kill this athaleb!"

Upon this Layelah dropped the reins, stood up, and looked at me with a smile.

"Oh, Atam-or," said she, "what a thing to ask! How

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can I go back now, when we have started for the land of the Orin?"

"We shall never reach the land of the Orin," I cried; "we shall perish in the sea!"

"Oh, no," said Layelah; "you cannot kill the athaleb. You are no more than an insect; your rod is a weak thing, and will break on his iron frame."

It was evident that Layelah had not the slightest idea of the powers of my rifle. There was no hesitation on my part. I took aim with the rifle. At that moment I was desperate. I thought of nothing but the swift flight of the athaleb, which was bearing me away forever from Almah. I could not endure that thought, and still less could I endure the thought that she should believe me false. It was therefore in a wild passion of rage and despair that I levelled my rifle, taking aim as well as I could at what seemed a vital part under the wing. The motion of the wing rendered this difficult, however, and I hesitated a moment, so as to make sure. All this time Layelah stood looking at me with a smile on her rosy lips and a merry twinkle in her eyes—evidently regarding my words as empty threats and my act as a vain pretence, and utterly unprepared for what was to follow.

Suddenly I fired both barrels in quick succession. The reports rang out in thunder over the sea. The athaleb gave a wild, appalling shriek, and fell straight down into the water, fluttering vainly with one wing, while the other hung down useless. A shriek of horror burst from Layelah. She started back, and fell from her standing-place into the waves beneath. The next instant we were all in the water together—the athaleb, writhing and lashing the water into foam, while I involuntarily clung to his coarse mane, and expected death every moment.

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But death did not come; for the athaleb did not sink, but floated with his back out of the water, the right pinion being sunk underneath and useless, and the left struggling vainly with the sea. But after a time he folded up the left wing and drew it close in to his side, and propelled himself with his long hind-legs. His right wing was broken, but he did not seem to have suffered any other injury.

Suddenly I heard a cry behind me:

"Atam-or! oh, Atam-or!"

I looked around and saw Layelah. She was swimming in the water and seemed exhausted. In the agitation of the past few moments I had lost sight of her, and had thought that she was drowned; but now the sight of her roused me from my stupor and brought me back to myself. She was swimming, yet her strokes were weak and her face full of despair. In an instant I had flung off my coat, rolled up the rifle and pistol in its folds, and sprung into the water. A few strokes brought me to Layelah. A moment more and I should have been too late. I held her head out of water, told her not to struggle, and then struck out to go back. It would have been impossible for me to do this encumbered with such a load, had I not fortunately perceived the floating wing of the athaleb close beside me. This I seized, and by means of it drew myself with Layelah alongside; after which I succeeded in putting her on the back of the animal, and soon followed myself.

The terror of the rifle had overwhelmed her, and the suddenness of the catastrophe had almost killed her. She had struggled in the water for a long time, and had called to me in vain. Now she was quite exhausted, and lay in my arms trembling and sobbing. I spoke to her encouragingly, and wrapped her in my coat, and rubbed her hands and feet, until at last she began to re-

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"THE NEXT INSTANT WE WERE ALL IN THE WATER TOGETHER."

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cover. Then she wept quietly for a long time; then the weeping-fit passed away. She looked up with a smile, and in her face there was unutterable gratitude.

"Atam-or," said she, "I never loved death like the rest of the Kosekin; but now—but now—I feel that death with you would be sweet."

Then tears came to her eyes, and I found tears coming to my own, so that I had to stoop down and kiss away the tears of Layelah. As I did so she twined both her arms around my neck, held me close to her, and sighed.

"Oh, Atam-or, death with you is sweet! And now you cannot reproach me— You have done this yourself, with your terrible power; and you have saved my life to let me die with you. You do not hate me, then, Atam-or, do you? Just speak once to a poor little girl, and say that you do not hate her!"

All this was very pitiable. What man that had a heart in his breast could listen unmoved to words like these, or look without emotion upon one so beautiful, so gentle, and so tender? It was no longer Layelah in triumph with whom I had to do, but Layelah in distress: the light banter, the teasing, mocking smile, the kindling eye, the ready laugh—all were gone. There was nothing now but mournful tenderness—the timid appeal of one who dreaded a repulse, the glance of deep affection, the abandonment of love.

I held Layelah in my arms, and I thought of nothing now but words of consolation for her. Life seemed over; death seemed inevitable; and there, on the back of the athaleb, we floated on the waters and waited for our doom.

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CHAPTER XXV.

FALLING, LIKE ICARUS, INTO THE SEA.

The aurora light, which had flamed brightly, was now extinct, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, where we floated on the back of the monster. He swam, forcing himself onward with his hind-legs, with one broad wing folded up close. Had both been folded up the athaleb could have swum rapidly; but the broken wing lay expanded over the water, tossing with the waves, so that our progress was but slight. Had it not been for this the athaleb's own instinct might have served to guide him towards some shore which we might have hoped to reach before life was extinct; but as it was, all thought of reaching any shore was out of the question, and there arose before us only the prospect of death—a death, too, which must be lingering and painful and cruel. Thus amid the darkness we floated, and the waves dashed around us, and the athaleb never ceased to struggle in the water, trying to force his way onward. It seemed sweet at that moment to have Layelah with me, for what could have been more horrible than loneliness amid those black waters? and Layelah's mind was made up to meet death with joy, so that her mood conveyed itself to me. And I thought that since death was inevitable it were better to meet it thus, and in this way end my life—not amid the horrors of the sacrifice and the *Mista Kosek*, but in a way which seemed natural to a seafaring man like myself, and with which I had long familiarized my thoughts. For

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I had fallen upon a world and among people which were all alien and unintelligible to me; and to live on would only open the way to new and worse calamities. There was peace also in the thought that my death would snatch the prospect of death from Almah. She would now be safe. It was only when we were together as lovers that death threatened her; but now since I was removed she could resume her former life, and she might remember me only as an episode in that life. That she would remember me I felt sure, and that she would weep for me and mourn after me was undeniable; but time as it passed would surely alleviate that grief, and Almah would live and be happy. Perhaps she might yet regain her native land and rejoin her loved kindred, whom she would tell of the stranger from an unknown shore who had loved her, and through whose death she had gained her life. Such were the thoughts that filled my mind as I floated over the black water with darkness all around, as I held Layelah in my arms, with my coat wrapped around her, and murmured in her ear tender words of consolation and sympathy.

A long, long time had passed—but how long I know not—when suddenly Layelah gave a cry, and started up on her knees, with her head bent forward listening intently. I too listened, and I could distinctly hear the sound of breakers. It was evident that we were approaching some shore; and, from what I remembered of the shore of Magones, such a shore meant death and death alone. We stood up and tried to peer through the gloom. At length we saw a whole line of breakers, and beyond all was black. We waited anxiously in that position, and drew steadily nearer. It was evident that the athaleb was desirous of reaching that shore, and we could do nothing but await the result.

But the athaleb had his wits about him, and swam

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along on a line with the breakers for some distance, until at length an opening appeared, into which he directed his course. Passing through this we reached still water, which seemed like a lagoon surrounded by a coral reef. The athaleb swam on farther, and at length we saw before us an island with a broad, sandy beach, beyond which was the shadowy outline of a forest. Here the monster landed, and dragged himself wearily upon the sand, where he spread his vast bulk out, and lay panting heavily. We dismounted—I first, so as to assist Layelah ; and then it seemed as if death were postponed for a time, since we had reached this place where the rich and rank vegetation spoke of nothing but vigorous life.

Fortune had indeed dealt strangely with me. I had fled with Almah, and with her had reached one desolate shore, and now I found myself with Layelah upon another shore, desolate also, but not a savage wilderness. This lonely island, ringed with the black ocean waters, was the abode of a life of its own, and there was nothing here to crush the soul into a horror of despair like that which was caused by the tremendous scenes on Magones.

In an instant Layelah revived from her gloom. She looked around, clapped her little hands, laughed aloud, and danced for joy.

"Oh, Atam-or," she cried, "see—see the trees, see the grass, the bushes! This is a land of wonder. As for food, you can call it down from the sky with your *sepet-ram*, or we can find it on the rocks. Oh, Atam-or! life is better than death, and we can live here and we can be happy. This shall be better to us than the lands of the Orin, for we shall be alone, and we shall be all in all to one another."

I could not help laughing, and I said,

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"Layelah, this is not the language of the Kosekin. You should at once go to the other side of this island, and sit down and wait for death."

"Never," said Layelah; "you are mine, Atam-or, and I never will leave you. If you wish me to die for you I will gladly lay down my life; but I will not leave you. I love you Atam-or; and now, whether it be life or death, it is all the same so long as I have you."

Our submersion in the sea and our long exposure afterwards had chilled both of us, but Layelah felt it most. She was shivering in her wet clothes in spite of my coat, which I insisted on her wearing, and I determined, if possible, to kindle a fire. Fortunately my powder was dry, for I had thrown off my flask with my coat before jumping into the sea, and thus I had the means of creating fire. I rubbed wet powder over my handkerchief, and then gathered some dried sticks and moss. After this I found some dead trees, the boughs of which were dry and brittle, and in the exercise I soon grew warm, and had the satisfaction of seeing a great heap of fagots accumulating. I fired my pistol into the handkerchief, which, being saturated with powder, caught the fire, and this I blew into a flame among the dried moss. A bright fire now sprang up and blazed high in the air; while I, in order to have an ample supply of fuel, continued to gather it for a long time. At length, as I came back, I saw Layelah lying on the sand in front of the fire, sound asleep. I was glad of this, for she was weary, and had seemed so weak and tremulous that I had felt anxious; so now I arranged my coat over her carefully, and then sat down for a time to think over this new turn which my fortune had taken.

This island was certainly very unlike Magones, yet I had no surety but that it might be equally destitute of food. This was the first question, and I could not think

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of sleep until I had found out more about the place. The aurora light, which constantly brightens and lessens in this strange world, was now shining gloriously, and I set forth to explore the island. The beach was of fine sand all the way. The water was smooth, and shut in on every side by an outer reef against which the sea-waves broke incessantly. As I walked I soon perceived what the island was; for I had often seen such places before in the South Pacific. It was, in fact, a coral islet, with a reef of rocks encircling it on every side. The vegetation, however, was unlike anything in the world beyond; for it consisted of many varieties of tree ferns, that looked like palms, and giant grasses, and bamboo. The island was but small, and the entire circuit was not over a mile. I saw nothing that looked like food, nor did it seem likely that in so small a place there could be enough sustenance for us. Our only hope would be from the sea, yet even here I could see no signs of any sort of shell-fish. On the whole the prospect was discouraging, and I returned to the starting-point with a feeling of dejection; but this feeling did not trouble me much at that time: my chief thought was of rest, and I flung myself down on the sand and fell asleep.

I was awakened by a cry from Layelah. Starting up, I saw her standing and looking into the sky. She was intensely excited. As soon as she saw me she rushed towards me and burst into tears, while I, full of wonder, could only stare upward.

"Oh!" cried Layelah, "they've turned back—they've found us! We shall have to leave our dear, lovely island. Oh, Atam-or, I shall lose you now; for never, never, never again will you have one thought of love for your poor Layelah!"

With these words she clung sobbing to me. For my part I do not remember what I said to soothe her, for

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the sight above was so amazing that it took up all my attention. The aurora shone bright, and in the sky I saw two vast objects wheeling and circling, as if about to descend. I recognized them at once as athalebs; but as their backs were hid from view by their immense wings, I could not make out whether they were wanderers about to alight of their own accord, or guided here by riders—perhaps by the Kosekin from whom we had been parted.

This much at least I remember. I said to Layelah that these athalebs were wild ones, which had come here because they saw or scented our wounded one; but Layelah shook her head with mournful meaning.

"Oh, no," said she, "Almah has come back for you. This firelight has guided them. If you had not made the fire they never, never, never could have found us; but now all is lost."

There was no time for conversation or discussion. The athalebs drew swiftly nearer and nearer, descending in long circuits, until at length they touched the ground not far away on the wide sandy beach. Then we saw people on their backs, and among them was Almah. We hurried towards them, and Almah rushed into my arms, to the great disgust of Layelah, for she was close beside me and saw it all. She gave an exclamation of grief and despair, and hurried away.

From Almah I learned that our disappearance had caused alarm; that two of the athalebs had come back in search of us; that they had been to Magones, and had searched over the seas, and were just about giving us up as lost when the firelight had attracted their attention and drawn them here.

I said nothing at that time about the cause of our disappearance, but merely remarked that the athaleb had fallen into the sea and swam here. This was sufficient.

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They had to remain here for some time longer to rest their athalebs. At length we prepared to depart. Our wounded athaleb was left behind to take care of himself. I was taken with Almah, and Layelah went on the other. We were thus separated; and so we set forth upon our return, and at length arrived at the *amir*.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

GRIMM'S LAW AGAIN.

DINNER was now announced, and Oxenden laid the manuscript aside; whereupon they adjourned to the cabin, where they proceeded to discuss both the repast and the manuscript.

"Well," said Featherstone, "More's story seems to be approaching a crisis. What do you think of it now, Melick? Do you still think it a sensational novel?"

"Partly so," said Melick; "but it would be nearer the mark to call it a satirical romance."

"Why not a scientific romance?"

"Because there's precious little science in it, but a good deal of quiet satire."

"Satire on what?" asked Featherstone. "I'll be hanged if I can see it."

"Oh, well," said Melick, "on things in general. The satire is directed against the restlessness of humanity; its impulses, feelings, hopes, and fears—all that men do and feel and suffer. It mocks us by exhibiting a new race of men, animated by passions and impulses which are directly the opposite of ours, and yet no nearer happiness than we are. It shows us a world where our evil is made a good, and our good an evil; there all that we consider a blessing is had in abundance—prolonged and perpetual sunlight, riches, power, fame—and yet these things are despised, and the people, turning away from them, imagine that they can find happiness in poverty, darkness, death, and unrequited love. The writer thus

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mocks at all our dearest passions and strongest desires; and his general aim is to show that the mere search for happiness *per se* is a vulgar thing, and must always result in utter nothingness. The writer also teaches the great lesson that the happiness of man consists not in external surroundings, but in the internal feelings, and that heaven itself is not a place, but a state. It is the old lesson which Milton extorted from Satan:

> "'What matter where, if I be still the same—'

"Or again:

> "'The mind is its own place, and of itself
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven—'"

"That's good too," cried Oxenden. "That reminds me of the German commentators who find in the 'Agamemnon' of Æschylus, or the 'Œdipus' of Sophocles, or the 'Hamlet' of Shakespeare motives and purposes of which the authors could never have dreamed, and give us a metaphysical, beer-and-tobacco-High-Dutch Clytemnestra, or Antigone, or Lady Macbeth. No, my boy, More was a simple sailor, and had no idea of satirizing anything."

"How, then, do you account for the perpetual undercurrent of meaning and innuendo that may be found in every line?"

"I deny that there is anything of the sort," said Oxenden. "It is a plain narrative of facts; but the facts are themselves such that they give a new coloring to the facts of our own life. They are in such profound antithesis to European ways that we consider them as being written merely to indicate that difference. It is like the 'Germania' of Tacitus, which many critics still hold to be a satire on Roman ways, while, as a matter of fact, it is simply a narrative of German manners and customs."

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"I hope," cried Melick, "that you do not mean to compare this awful rot and rubbish to the 'Germania' of Tacitus?"

"By no means," said Oxenden; "I merely asserted that in one respect they were analogous. You forced on the allusion to the 'Germania' by calling this 'rot and rubbish' a satirical romance."

"Oh, well," said Melick, "I only referred to the intention of the writer. His plan is one thing, and his execution quite another. His plan is not bad, but he fails utterly in his execution. The style is detestable. If he had written in the style of a plain seaman, and told a simple unvarnished tale, it would have been all right. In order to carry out properly such a plan as this the writer should have taken Defoe as his model, or, still better, Dean Swift. 'Gulliver's Travels' and 'Robinson Crusoe' show what can be done in this way, and form a standard by which all other attempts must be judged. But this writer is tawdry; he has the worst vices of the sensational school—he shows everywhere marks of haste, gross carelessness, and universal feebleness. When he gets hold of a good fancy, he lacks the patience that is necessary in order to work it up in an effective way. He is a gross plagiarist, and over and over again violates in the most glaring manner all the ordinary proprieties of style. What can be more absurd, for instance, than the language which he puts into the mouth of Layelah. Not content with making her talk like a sentimental boarding-school, bread-and-butter English miss, he actually forgets himself so far as to put in her mouth a threadbare joke, which every one has heard since childhood."

"What is that?"

"Oh, that silly speech about the athaleb swallowing its victuals whole."

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"What's the matter with that?" asked Oxenden. "It's merely a chance resemblance. In translating her words into English they fell by accident into that shape. No one but you would find fault with them. Would it have been better if he had translated her words into the scientific phraseology which the doctor made use of with regard to the ichthyosaurus? He might have made it this way: 'Does it bite?' 'No, it swallows its food without mastication.' Would that have been better? Besides, it's all very well to talk of imitating Defoe and Swift; but suppose he couldn't have done it?"

"Then he shouldn't have written the book."

"In that case how could his father have heard about his adventures?"

"His father!" exclaimed Melick. "Do you mean to say that you still accept all this as *bona fide?*"

"Do you mean to say," retorted Oxenden, "that you still have any doubt about the authenticity of this remarkable manuscript?"

At this each looked at the other; Melick elevated his eyebrows, and Oxenden shrugged his shoulders; but each seemed unable to find words to express his amazement at the other's stupidity, and so they took refuge in silence.

"What do you understand by this athaleb, doctor?" asked Featherstone.

"The athaleb?" said the doctor. "Why, it is clearly the pterodactyl."

"By-the-bye," interrupted Oxenden, "do please take notice of that name. It affords another exemplification of 'Grimm's Law.' The Hebrew word is 'ataleph,' and means bat. The Kosekin word is 'athaleb.' Here you see the thin letter of Hebrew represented by the aspirated letter of the Kosekin language, while the aspirated Hebrew is represented by the Kosekin medial."

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"Too true," exclaimed Melick, in a tone of deep conviction; "and now, Oxenden, won't you sing us a song?"

"Nonsense," said Featherstone; "let the doctor tell us about the athaleb."

"Well," resumed the doctor, "as I was saying, it must be undoubtedly the pterodactyl. It is a most extraordinary animal, and is a species of flying lizard, although differing from the lizard in many respects. It had the head and neck of a bird, the trunk and tail of an ordinary mammal, the jaws and teeth of a reptile, and the wings of a bat. Owen describes one whose sweep of wings exceeded twenty feet, and many have been found of every gradation of size down to that of a bat. There is no reason why they should not be as large as More says; and I, for my part, do not suspect him of exaggeration. Some have supposed that a late, lingering individual may have suggested the idea of the fabulous dragon—an idea which seems to be in the minds of nearly all the human race, for in the early records of many nations we find the destruction of dragons assigned to their gods and heroes. The figure of the pterodactyl represents pretty closely that which is given to the dragons. It is not impossible that they may have existed into the period which we call prehistoric, and that monsters far larger than any which we have yet discovered may have lingered until the time when man began to increase upon the earth, to spread over its surface, and to carve upon wood and stone representations of the most striking objects around him. When the living pterodactyls had disappeared the memory of them was preserved; some new features were added, and the imagination went so far as to endow them with the power of belching forth smoke and flames. Thus the dragon idea pervaded the minds of men, and instead of a natural animal it became a fabulous one.

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"The fingers of the fore-legs were of the ordinary dimensions, and terminated with crooked nails, and these were probably used to suspend themselves from trees. When in repose it rested on its hind-legs like a bird, and held its neck curving behind, so that its enormous head should not disturb its equilibrium. The size and form of the feet, of the leg, and of the thigh prove that they could hold themselves erect with firmness, their wings folded, and move about in this way like birds, just as More describes them as doing. Like birds they could also perch on trees, and could crawl like bats and lizards along the rocks and cliffs.

"Some think that they were covered with scales; but I am of the opinion that they had a horny hide, with a ridge of hair running down their backs—in which opinion I am sustained by More's account. The smaller kinds were undoubtedly insectivorous; but the larger ones must have been carnivorous, and probably fed largely on fish."

"Well, at any rate," said Melick, gravely, "this athaleb solves the difficult question as to how the Troglodytes emigrated to the South Pole."

"How?" asked the doctor.

"Why, they must have gone there on athalebs! Your friends, the pterodactyls, probably lingered longest among the Troglodytes, who, seeing that they were rapidly dying out, concluded to depart to another and a better world. One beauty of this theory is that it cannot possibly be disproved; another is that it satisfies all the requirements of the case; a third is, that it accounts for the disappearance of the pterodactyls in our world, and their appearance at the South Pole; and there are forty or fifty other facts, all included in this theory, which I have not time just now to enumerate, but will try to do so after we have finished reading the

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manuscript. I will only add, that the athaleb must be regarded as another link which binds the Kosekin to the Semitic race."

"Another link?" said Oxenden. "That I already have; and it is one that carries conviction with it."

"All your arguments invariably do, my dear fellow."

"What is it?" asked the doctor.

"The Kosekin alphabet," said Oxenden.

"I can't see how you can make anything out of that," said the doctor.

"Very well, I can easily explain," replied Oxenden. "In the first place we must take the old Hebrew alphabet. I will write down the letters in their order first."

Saying this, he hastily jotted down some letters on a piece of paper, and showed to the doctor the following:

	Labials.	Palatals.	Linguals.
A	B	C (or G)	D
E	F	Ch (or H)	Dh (or Th)
I	Liquids, L	M	N
O	P	K	T

"That," said he, "is substantially the order of the old Hebrew alphabet."

"But," said the doctor, "the Kosekin alphabet differs in its order altogether from that."

"That very difference can be shown to be all the stronger proof of a connection between them," said Oxenden.

"I should like to know how."

"The fact is," said Oxenden, "these letters are represented differently in the two languages, in exact accordance with Grimm's Law."

"By Jove!" cried Featherstone, "Grimm's Law again."

"According to that law," continued Oxenden, "the letters of the alphabet ought to change their order.

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Now let us leave out the vowels and linguals, and deal only with the mutes. First, we have in the Hebrew alphabet the medials B, G, and D. Very well; in the Kosekin we have standing first the thin letters, or tenues, according to Grimm's Law, namely, P, K, T. Next, we have in the Hebrew the aspirates F, Ch, Dh. In the Kosekin alphabet we have corresponding to them the medials B, G, D. Next, we have in the Hebrew the tenues, or thin letters P, K, T. In the Kosekin we have the corresponding aspirates F, Ch, Th. The vowels, liquids, and sibilants need not be regarded just here; for the proof from the mutes is sufficient to satisfy any reasonable man."

"Well," said Melick, "I for one am thoroughly satisfied, and don't need another single word. The fact is, I never knew before the all-sufficient nature of Grimm's Law. Why, it can unlock any mystery! When I get home I must buy one—a tame one, if possible, and keep him with me always. It is more useful to a literary man than to any other. It is said that with a knowledge of Grimm's Law a man may wander through the world from Iceland to Ceylon, and converse pleasantly in all the Indo-European languages. More must have had Grimm's Law stowed away somewhere about him; and that's the reason why he escaped the icebergs, the volcanoes, the cannibals, the subterranean channel monster, and arrived at last safe and sound in the land of the Kosekin. What I want is Grimm's Law—a nice tidy one, well-trained, in good working order, and kind in harness; and the moment I get one I intend to go to the land of the Kosekin myself."

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CHAPTER XXVII.

OXENDEN PREACHES A SERMON.

"MAGONES," said the doctor, "is clearly a volcanic island, and, taken in connection with the other volcanoes around, shows how active must be the subterranean fires at the South Pole. It seems probable to me that the numerous caves of the Kosekin were originally fissures in the mountains, formed by convulsions of nature; and also that the places excavated by man must consist of soft volcanic rock, such as pumice-stone, or rather tufa, easily worked, and remaining permanently in any shape into which it may be fashioned. As to Magones, it seems another Iceland; for there are the same wild and hideous desolation, the same impassable wilderness, and the same universal scenes of ruin, lighted up by the baleful and tremendous volcanic fires."

"But what of that little island on which they landed?" asked Featherstone. "This, surely, was not volcanic."

"No," said the doctor, "that must have been a coral island."

"By-the-bye, is it really true," asked Featherstone, "that these coral islands are the work of little insects?"

"Well, they may be called insects," replied the doctor; "they are living zoophytes of most minute dimensions, who, however, compensate for their smallness of size by their inconceivable numbers. Small as these are, they have accomplished infinitely more than all that ever was done by the ichthyosaurus, the plesiosaurus, the

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pterodactyl, and the whole tribe of monsters that once filled the earth. Immense districts and whole mountains have been built by these minute creatures. They have been at work for ages, and are still at work. It is principally in the South seas that their labors are carried on. Near the Maldive Islands they have formed a mass whose volume is equal to the Alps. Around New Caledonia they have built a barrier of reefs four hundred miles in length, and another along the northwest coast of Australia a thousand miles in length. In the Pacific Ocean islands, reefs, and islets innumerable have been constructed by them, which extend for an immense distance.

"The coral islands are called 'atolls.' They are nearly always circular, with a depression in the centre. They are originally made ring-shaped, but the action of the ocean serves to throw fragments of rock into the inner depression, which thus fills up; firm land appears; the rock crumbles into soil; the winds and birds and currents bring seeds here, and soon the new island is covered with verdure. Those little creatures have played a part in the past quite as important as in the present. All Germany rests upon a bank of coral; and they seem to have been most active during the Colitic Period."

"How do the creatures act?" asked Featherstone.

"Nobody knows," replied the doctor.

A silence now followed, which was at last broken by Oxenden.

"After all," said he, "these monsters and marvels of nature form the least interesting feature in the land of the Kosekin. To me the people themselves are the chief object of interest. Where did they get that strange, all-pervading love of death, which is as strong in them as love of life is in us?"

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"THE ATOLLS," OR CORAL ISLANDS.

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"Why, they got it from the imagination of the writer of the manuscript," interrupted Melick.

"Yes, it's easy to answer it from your point of view; yet from my point of view it is more difficult. I sometimes think that it may be the strong spirituality of the Semitic race, carried out under exceptionally favorable circumstances to the ultimate results; for the Semitic race more than all others thought little of this life, and turned their affections to the life that lives beyond this. The Kosekin may thus have had a spiritual development of their own, which ended in this.

"Yet there may be another reason for it, and I sometimes think that the Kosekin may be nearer to the truth than we are. We have by nature a strong love of life —it is our dominant feeling—but yet there is in the minds of all men a deep underlying conviction of the vanity of life, and its worthlessness. In all ages and among all races the best, the purest, and the wisest have taught this truth, that human life is not a blessing; that the evil predominates over the good; and that our best hope is to gain a spirit of acquiescence with its inevitable ills. All philosophy and all religions teach us this one solemn truth, that in this life the evil surpasses the good. It has always been so. Suffering has been the lot of all living things, from the giant of the primeval swamps down to the smallest zoophyte. It is far more so with man. Some favored classes in every age may furnish forth a few individuals who may perhaps lead lives of self-indulgence and luxury; but to the mass of mankind life has ever been, and must ever be, a prolonged scene of labor intermingled with suffering. The great Indian religions, whether Brahmanic or Buddhistic, teach as their cardinal doctrine that life is an evil. Buddhism is more pronounced in this, for it teaches more emphatically than even the Kosekin that the chief

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end of man is to get rid of the curse of life and gain the bliss of Nirvana, or annihilation. True, it does not take so practical a form as among the Kosekin, yet it is believed by one third of the human race as the foundation of the religion in which they live and die. We need not go to the Kosekin, however, for such maxims as these. The intelligent Hindoos, the Chinese, the Japanese, with many other nations, all cling firmly to this belief. Sakyamoum Gautama Buddha, the son and heir of a mighty monarch, penetrated with the conviction of the misery of life, left his throne, embraced a life of voluntary poverty, want, and misery, so that he might find his way to a better state—the end before him being this, that he might ultimately escape from the curse of existence. He lived till old age, gained innumerable followers, and left to them as a solemn legacy the maxim that not to exist is better than to exist; that death is better than life. Since his day millions of his followers have upheld his principles and lived his life. Even among the joyous Greeks we find this feeling at times bursting forth; it comes when we least expect it, and not even a Kosekin poet could express this view more forcibly than Sophocles in the 'Œdipus' at Colonus:

> " 'Not to be born surpasses every lot;
> And the next best lot by far, when one is born,
> Is to go back whence he came as soon as possible;
> For while youth is present bringing vain follies,
> What woes does it not have, what ills does it not bear—
> Murders, factions, strife, war, envy,
> But the extreme of misery is attained by loathsome old age—
> Old age, strengthless, unsociable, friendless,
> Where all evils upon evils dwell together.' "

"I'll give you the words of a later poet," said Melick, who takes a different view of the case. I think I'll sing them with your permission.

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Melick swallowed a glass of wine and then sang the following:

> "'They may rail at this life: from the hour I began it
> I found it a life full of kindness and bliss,
> And until they can show me some happier planet,
> More social and bright, I'll content me with this.
> As long as the world has such lips and such eyes
> As before me this moment enraptured I see,
> They may say what they will of their orbs in the skies,
> But this earth is the planet for you, love, and me.'

"What a pity it is," continued Melick, "that the writer of this manuscript had not the philological, theological, sociological, geological, palæological, ornithological, and all the other logical attainments of yourself and the doctor! He could then have given us a complete view of the nature of the Kosekin, morally and physically; he could have treated of the geology of the soil, the ethnology of the people, and could have unfolded before us a full and comprehensive view of their philosophy and religion, and could have crammed his manuscript with statistics. I wonder why he didn't do it even as it was. It must have been a strong temptation."

"More," said Oxenden, with deep impressiveness, "was a simple-minded though somewhat emotional sailor, and merely wrote in the hope that his story might one day meet the eyes of his father. I certainly should like to find some more accurate statements about the science, philosophy, and religion of the Kosekin; yet, after all, such things could not be expected."

"Why not?" said Melick; "it was easy enough for him."

"How?" asked Oxenden.

"Why, he had only to step into the British Museum, and in a couple of hours he could have crammed up on

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all those points in science, philosophy, ethnology, and theology, about which you are so anxious to know."

"Well," said Featherstone, "suppose we continue our reading? I believe it is my turn now. I sha'n't be able to hold out so long as you did, Oxenden, but I'll do what I can."

Saying this, Featherstone took the manuscript and went on to read.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN PRISON.

It was with hearts full of the gloomiest forebodings that we returned to the *amir*, and these we soon found to be fully justified. The athalebs descended at that point from which they had risen—namely, on the terrace immediately in front of the cavern where they had been confined. We then dismounted, and Layelah with the Kosekin guards accompanied us to our former chambers. There she left us, saying that a communication would be sent to us.

We were now left to our own conjectures.

"I wonder what they will do to us?" said I.

"It is impossible to tell," said Almah.

"I suppose," said I, "they will punish us in some way; but then punishment among the Kosekin is what seems honor and reward to me. Perhaps they will spare our lives, for that in their eyes ought to be the severest punishment and the deepest disgrace imaginable."

Almah sighed.

"The Kosekin do not always act in this matter as one would suppose," said she. "It is quite likely that they may dread our escaping, and may conclude to sacrifice us at once."

On the next *jom* I had a visit from the Kohen Gadol. He informed me that the paupers had held a Council of State, in which they had made a special examination of our late flight. He and Layelah had both been exam-

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ined, as well as the Kosekin who had gone after us; but Layelah's testimony was by far the most important.

The Council of State gathered from Layelah's report that we had fled to Magones for the especial purpose of gaining the most blessed of deaths ; that she pursued us in the interest of the state ; and that we on her arrival had generously surrendered our own selfish desires, and had at once returned.

We learned that much gratification was felt by the council, and also expressed, at Layelah's account and at our action.

First, at our eager love of death, which was so natural in their eyes ; secondly, at the skill which we had shown in selecting Magones ; and, finally, at our generosity in giving up so readily the blessed prospect of exile and want and death so as to come back to the *amir*. Had we been Kosekin our acts would have been natural enough ; but, being foreigners, it was considered more admirable in us, and it seemed to show that we were equal to the Kosekin themselves. It was felt, however, that in our eager rush after death we had been somewhat selfish ; but as this probably arose from our ignorance of the law, it might be overlooked. On the whole, it was decided that we ought to be rewarded, and that too with the greatest benefits that the Kosekin could bestow. What these benefits were the Kohen Gadol could not say ; and thus we were left, as before, in the greatest possible anxiety. We still dreaded the worst. The highest honors of these men might well awaken apprehension ; for they thought that the chief blessings were poverty and darkness and death.

Layelah next came to see me. She was as amiable as ever, and showed no resentment at all. She gave me an account of what had happened at the Council of State,

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which was the same as what I had heard from the Kohen Gadol.

I asked her why she had made such a report of us.

"To conciliate their good-will," said Layelah. "For if they thought that you had really fled from death from a love of life, they would have felt such contempt for you that serious harm might have happened."

"Yes," said I; "but among the Kosekin what you call harm would probably have been just what I want. I should like to be viewed with contempt, and considered unworthy of death and the *Mista Kosek*, and other such honors."

"Oh, yes," said Layelah, "but that doesn't follow; for you see the paupers love death so intensely that they long to bestow it on all; and if they knew you were afraid of it they would be tempted to bestow it upon you immediately, just to show you how delightful a thing it is. And that was the very thing that I was trying to guard against."

"Well," said I, "and what is the result? Do you know what their decision is?"

"Yes," said Layelah.

"What is it?" I asked, eagerly.

Layelah hesitated.

"What is it?" I cried again, full of impatience.

"I'm afraid it will not sound very pleasant to you," said Layelah, "but at any rate your life is spared for the present. They have decided to give you what they call the greatest possible honors and distinctions."

Layelah paused, and looked at me earnestly. For my part these words sounded ominous, and were full of the darkest meaning.

"Tell me all," I said; "don't keep me in suspense."

"Well," said Layelah, "I'm afraid you will think it

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hard; but I must tell you. I will tell it, therefore, as briefly and formally as possible.

"First, then, they have decreed the blessing of separation. You and Almah must now be parted, since this is regarded as the highest bliss of lovers.

"Secondly, they have decreed the blessing of poverty. All these luxuries will be taken away, and you will be raised to an equality in this respect with the great paupers.

"Thirdly, you are to have the blessing of darkness. You are to be removed from this troublesome and vexatious light, which here is regarded as a curse, and henceforth live without it.

"Fourthly, the next decree is the high reward of imprisonment. You are to be delivered from the evils of liberty, and shut up in a dark cavern, from which it will be impossible to escape or to communicate with any one outside.

"Fifthly, you are to associate with the greatest of the paupers, the class that is the most honored and influential. You will be present at all their highest councils, and will have the privilege of perpetual intercourse with those reverend men. They will tell you of the joys of poverty, the happiness of darkness, and the bliss of death."

Layelah paused, and looked at me earnestly.

"Is there anything more?" I gasped.

"No," said she. "Is not that enough? Some were in favor of bestowing immediate death, but they were outvoted by the others. You surely cannot regret that."

Layelah's words sounded like the words of a mocking demon. Yet she did not wish to distress me; she had merely stated my sentence in formal language, without any attempt to soften its tremendous import. As for me, I was overwhelmed with despair. There was but

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one thought in my mind—it was not of myself, but of Almah.

"And Almah?" I cried.

"Almah," said Layelah, "she will have the same; you are both included in the same sentence."

At this a groan burst from me. Horror overwhelmed me. I threw myself down upon the floor and covered my face with my hands. All was lost! Our fate—Almah's fate was darkness, imprisonment, and death. Could anything be imagined that might mitigate such woes as these? Could anything be conceived of as more horrible? Yes, there remained something more, and this was announced by Layelah.

"Finally," said she, "it has been decreed that you shall not only have the blessing of death, but that you shall have the rare honor of belonging to the chosen few who are reserved for the *Mista Kosek.* Thus far this had not been granted. It was esteemed too high an honor for strangers; but now, by an exercise of unparalleled liberality, the Grand Council of Paupers have added this, as the last and best, to the high honors and rewards which they have decreed for you and Almah."

To this I had nothing to say; I was stupefied with horror. To such words what answer could be made? At that moment I could think of nothing but this tremendous sentence—this infliction of appalling woes under the miserable name of blessings! I could not think of Layelah; nor did I try to conjecture what her motives might be in thus coming to me as the messenger of evil. I could not find space amid my despair for speculations as to her own part in this, or stop to consider whether she was acting the part of a mere messenger, or was influenced by resentment or revenge. All this was far away from my thoughts; for all my mind was filled with the dread sentence of the Council of Pau-

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pers and the baleful prospect of the woes that awaited us.

On the next *jom* I saw Almah. She had already learned the awful tidings. She met me with a face of despair; for there was no longer any hope, and all that remained for us was a last farewell. After this we parted, and each of us was taken to our respective prisons.

I was taken along dark passages until I came to a cavern with a low, dark portal. Upon entering I found the darkness deeper than usual, and there was only one solitary lamp which diffused but a feeble ray through the gloom. The size of the place could not be made out. I saw here a group of human beings, and by the feeble ray of the lamp I perceived that they were wan and thin and emaciated, with scant clothing, all in rags, squalor, misery, and dirt; with coarse hair matted together, and long nails and shaggy beards. They reminded me in their personal appearance of the cannibals of the outer shore. These hideous beings all gathered around me, blinking at me with their bleary eyes and grinning with their abominable faces, and then each one embraced me. The filth, squalor, and unutterable foulness of these wretches all combined to fill my soul with loathing, and the inconceivable horror of that embrace wellnigh overwhelmed me. Yet, after all, it was surpassed by the horror of the thought that Almah might be at that very moment undergoing the same experience; and for her such a thing must be worse than for me.

I retreated as far as possible from them, deep into the thick darkness, and sat down. No convicted felon at the last hour of life, no prisoner in the dungeons of the Inquisition, ever could have suffered more mental agony than I did at that moment. The blessings, the awful blessings of the Kosekin were descending upon my mis-

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erable head—separation from Almah, squalor and dirt, imprisonment, the society of these filthy creatures, darkness, the shadow of death, and beyond all the tremendous horrors of the *Mista Kosek!*

I do not know how the time passed, for at first I was almost stupefied with despair; nor could I ever grow reconciled to the society of these wretches, scarce human, who were with me. Some food was offered me—filthy stuff, which I refused. My refusal excited warm commendation; but I was warned against starving myself, as that was against the law. In my despair I thought of my pistol and rifle, which I still kept with me—of using these against my jailors, and bursting forth; but this wild impulse soon passed away, for its utter hopelessness was manifest. My only hope, if hope it was, lay in waiting, and it was not impossible that I might see Almah again, if only once.

Joms passed away, I know not how. The Chief Pauper, who is the greatest man in the land of the Kosekin, made several attempts to converse with me, and was evidently very condescending and magnanimous in his own eyes; but I did not meet his advances graciously—he was too abhorrent. He was a hideous wretch, with eyes nearly closed and bleary, thick, matted hair, and fiendish expression—in short, a devil incarnate in rags and squalor.

But as the *joms* passed I found it difficult to repel my associates. They were always inflicting their society upon me, and thrusting on me nasty little acts of kindness. The Chief Pauper was more persistent than all, with his chatter and disgusting civilities. He was evidently glad to get hold of a fresh subject for his talkative genius; he was a very garrulous cannibal, and perhaps my being a foreigner made me more interesting in his eyes.

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The chief topic of his discourse was death. He hated life, loved death, longed for it in all its forms, whether arising from disease or from violence. He was an amateur in corpses, and had a larger experience in dead bodies than any other man in the nation.

I could not help asking him once why he did not kill himself, and be done with it.

"That," said he, "is not allowed. The temptation to kill one's self is one of the strongest that human nature can experience, but it is one that we must struggle against, of course, for it is against all law. The greatest blessing must not be seized. It must be given by nature or man. Those who violate the blessed mystery of death are infamous.

He assured me that he had all his life cultivated the loftiest feelings of love to others. His greatest happiness consisted in doing good to others, especially in killing them. The blessing of death, being the greatest of all blessings, was the one which he loved best to bestow upon others; and the more he loved his fellow-creatures the more he wished to give them this blessing. "You," said he, "are particularly dear to me, and I should rather give to you the blessing of death than to any other human being. I love you, Atam-or, and I long to kill you at this moment."

"You had better not try it," said I, grimly.

He shook his head despondingly.

"Oh, no," said he; "it is against the law. I must not do it till the time comes."

"Do you kill many?" I asked.

"It is my pleasing and glorious office," he replied, "to kill more than any other; for, you must know, I am the *Sar Tabakin*" (chief of the executioners).

The Chief Pauper's love of death had grown to be an all-absorbing passion. He longed to give death to all.

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As with us there are certain philanthropists who have a mania for doing good, so here the pauper class had a mania for doing what they considered good in this way. The Chief Pauper was a sort of Kosekin Howard or Peabody, and was regarded by all with boundless reverence. To me, however, he was an object of never-ending hate, abhorrence, and loathing; and, added to this, was the thought that there might be here some equally hideous female—some one like the nightmare hag of the outer sea—a torment and a horror to Almah.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

THE CEREMONY OF SEPARATION.

Separated from Almah, surrounded by foul fiends, in darkness and the shadow of death, with the baleful prospect of the *Mista Kosek*, it was mine to endure the bitterest anguish and despair; and in me these feelings were all the worse from the thought that Almah was in a similar state, and was enduring equal woes. All that I suffered in my present condition she too was suffering —and from this there was no possibility of escape. Perhaps her surroundings were even worse, and her sufferings keener; for who could tell what these people might inflict in their strange and perverted impulses?

Many *joms* passed, and there was only one thing that sustained me—the hope of seeing Almah yet again, though it were but for a moment. That hope, however, was but faint. There was no escape. The gate was barred without and within. I was surrounded by miscreants, who formed the chief class in the state and the ruling order. The Chief Pauper was the highest magistrate in the land, from whose opinion there was no appeal, and the other paupers here formed the Kosekin senate. Here, in imprisonment and darkness, they formed a secret tribunal and controlled everything. They were objects of envy to all. All looked forward to this position as the highest object of human ambition, and the friends and relatives of those here rejoiced in their honor. Their powers were not executive, but deliberative. To the Melcks and Athons were left the

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exercise of authority, but their acts were always in subordination to the will of the paupers.

"I have everything that heart can wish," said the Chief Pauper to me once. "Look at me, Atam-or, and see me as I stand here: I have poverty, squalor, cold, perpetual darkness, the privilege of killing others, the near prospect of death, and the certainty of the *Mista Kosek*—all these I have, and yet, Atam-or, after all, I am not happy."

To this strange speech I had nothing to say.

"Yes," continued the Chief Pauper, in a pensive tone, "for twenty seasons I have reigned as chief of the Kosekin in this place. My cavern is the coldest, squalidest, and darkest in the land. My raiment is the coarsest rags. I have separated from all my friends. I have had much sickness. I have the closest captivity. Death, darkness, poverty, want, all that men most live and long for, are mine to satiety; and yet, as I look back and count the *joms* of my life to see in how many I have known happiness, I find that in all they amount to just seven! Oh, Atam-or, what a comment is this on the vanity of human life!"

To this I had no answer ready; but by way of saying something, I offered to kill him on the spot.

"Nay, nay, Atam-or," said he, with a melancholy smile, "do not tempt me. Leave me to struggle with temptations by myself, and do not seek to make me falter in my duty. Yes, Atam-or, you behold in me a melancholy example of the folly of ambition; for I often think, as I look down from my lofty eminence, that after all it is as well to remain content in the humble sphere in which we are placed at birth; for perhaps, if the truth were known, there is quite as much real happiness among the rich and splendid—among the Athons and Meleks.'

On this occasion I took advantage of the Chief Pau-

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per's softer mood to pour forth an earnest entreaty for him to save Almah's life, or at least to mitigate her miseries. Alas! he was inexorable. It was like an appeal of some mad prisoner to some gentle-hearted governor in Christendom, entreating him to put some fellow-prisoner to death, or at least to make his confinement more severe.

The Chief Pauper stared at me in horror.

"You are a strange being, Atam-or," said he, gently. "Sometimes I think you mad. I can only say that such a request is horrible to me beyond all words. Such degradation and cruelty to the gentle and virtuous Almah is outrageous and forever impossible; no, we will not deprive her of a single one of those blessings which she now enjoys."

I turned away in despair.

At length one *jom* the Chief Pauper came to me with a smile and said,

"Atam-or, let me congratulate you on this joyous occasion."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"You are to have your ceremony of separation."

"Separation!" I repeated.

"Yes," said he, "Almah has given notice to us. She has announced her intention of giving you up, and separating from you. With us the woman always gives the announcement in such cases. We have fixed the ceremony for the third *jom* from this, and I hope you will not think it too soon."

This strange intelligence moved me greatly. I did not like the idea of a ceremony of separation; but behind this there rose the prospect of seeing Almah, and I felt convinced that she had devised this as a mode of holding communication with me, or at least of seeing me again. The thought of Layelah was the only thing

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that interfered with this belief, for it might be her doings after all; yet the fact remained that I was to see Almah, and in this I rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

The appointed *jom* came. A procession was formed of the paupers. The chief did not go, as he never left the cavern except on the great sacrifices and *Mista Koseks.* The door was opened, and I accompanied the procession. On our way all was dark, and after traversing many passages we came at length to the door of a cavern as gloomy as the one I had left. On entering this I found all dark and drear; and a little distance before me there was a light burning, around which was gathered a group of hags hideous beyond all expression. But these I scarcely noticed; for there amid them, all pale and wan, with her face now lighted up with joyous and eager expectation, I saw my darling—my Almah! I caught her in my arms, and for a few moments neither of us spoke a word. She sobbed upon my breast, but I knew that the tears which she shed were tears of joy. Nor was our joy checked by the thought that it was to be so short-lived. It was enough at that moment that we saw one another—enough that we were in one another's arms; and so we mingled our tears and shared one common rapture. And sweet it was—sweet beyond all expression—the sweetest moment in all my life; for it had come in the midst of the drear desolation of my heart and the black despair. It was like a flash of lightning in the intense darkness, short and sudden indeed, yet still intense while it lasted, and in an instant filling all with its glow.

"I did this," murmured Almah, "to see you and to save you."

"Save me!" I repeated.

"Yes," said she, "I have seen Layelah. She told me

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that there is this chance and this one only to save you. I determined to try it. I cannot bear to think of you at the sacrifice—and for love of me meeting your death—for I would die to save you, Atam-or."

I pressed her closer in my arms.

"Oh, Almah," said I, "I would die to save you! and if this ceremony will save you I will go through with it, and accept my fate whatever it may be."

We were now interrupted.

The women—the hags of horror—the shriek-like ones, as I may call them; or the fiend-like, the female fiends, the foul ones—they were all around us; and one there was who looked so exactly like the nightmare hag of the outer sea that I felt sure she must be the same, who by some strange chance had come here. Such, indeed, is quite likely, for there may have been a pass over the mountains to the land of the Kosekin; and those savage cannibals may all have been honored Kosekin exiles, dwelling in poverty, want, woe, and darkness, all of which may have been allotted to them as a reward for eminent virtues. And so here she was, the nightmare hag, and I saw that she recognized me.

A circle was now formed around us, and the light stood in the middle. The nightmare hag also stood within the circle on the other side of the light opposite us. The beams of the lamp flickered through the darkness, faintly illuminating the faces of the horrible creatures around, who, foul and repulsive as harpies, seemed like unclean beasts, ready to make us their prey. Their glances seemed to menace death; their blear eyes rested upon us with a horrid eager hunger. My worst fears at that moment seemed realized; for I saw that Almah's associates were worse than mine, and her fate had been more bitter. And I wondered how it had been possible for her to live among such associates; or, even though

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"THE WOMEN — THE HAGS OF HORROR — THE SHRIEK-LIKE ONES, AS I MAY CALL THEM, WERE ALL AROUND US."

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she had lived thus far, whether it would be possible for her to endure it longer.

And now there arose a melancholy chant from the old hags around—a dreadful strain, that sounded like a funeral dirge, sung in shrill, discordant voices, led by the nightmare hag, who as she sang waved in her hand a kind of club. All the time I held Almah in my arms, regardless of those around us, thinking only of her from whom I must soon again be separated, and whom I must leave in this drear abode to meet her fearful fate alone. The chant continued for some time, and as long as it continued it was sweet to me; for it prolonged the meeting with Almah, and postponed by so much our separation.

At length the chant ceased. The nightmare hag looked fixedly at us, and spoke these words:

"You have embraced for the last time. Henceforth there is no more sorrow in your love. You may be happy now in being forever disunited, and in knowing the bliss of eternal separation. As darkness is better than light, as death is better than life, so you may find separation better than union."

She now gave a blow with her club at the lamp, which broke it to atoms and extinguished the flame. She continued:

"As the baleful light is succeeded by the blessed darkness, so may you find the light of union followed by the blessed darkness of separation."

And now in the deep darkness we stood clasped in one another's arms; while around us, from the horrible circle of hags, there arose another chant as harsh and discordant as the previous one, but which, nevertheless, like that, served at least to keep us together a little longer. For this reason it sounded sweeter than the sweetest music; and therefore, when at last the hideous

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noise ended, I felt a pang of grief, for I knew that I must now give up Almah forever.

I was right. The ceremony was over. We had to part, and we parted with tears of despair. I was led away, and as I went I heard Almah's sobs. I broke away, and tried to return for one more embrace; but in the darkness I could not find her, and could only hear her sobs at a greater distance, which showed that she too was being led away. I called after her,

"Farewell, Almah!"

Her reply came back broken with sobs.

"Farewell forever, Atam-or!"

I was once more led away, and again traversed the dark passages, and again came back to my den, which now seemed dark with the blackness of despair.

On my return I was formally and solemnly congratulated by all the paupers. I should not have received their congratulations had I not expected that there would be something more. I expected that something would be said about the result of this act of separation; for Almah had believed that it would have been the means of saving my life, and I believed that it would be the means of saving her life, and for this reason each of us had performed our part; although, of course, the joy of meeting with one another would of itself have been sufficient, and more than sufficient, to make that ceremony an object of desire. I thought, therefore, that some statement might now be made to the effect that by means of this ceremony my status among the Kosekin would be changed, and that both I and Almah, being no longer lovers, would be no longer fit for the sacrifice. To my intense disappointment, however, nothing whatever was said that had the remotest reference to this.

On the following *jom* I determined to ask the Chief

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Pauper himself directly; and accordingly, after a brief preamble, I put the question point-blank:

"Will our ceremony of separation make any difference as to our sacrifice?"

"What?" he asked, with a puzzled expression.

I repeated the question.

"I don't understand," said he, still looking puzzled.

Upon this I once more repeated it.

"How can that be?" said he, at length; "how can the ceremony of separation have any effect upon your sacrifice? The ceremony of separation stands by itself as the sign and symbol of an additional blessing. This new happiness of separation is a great favor, and will make you the object of new envy and admiration; for few have been so fortunate as you in all the history of the Kosekin. But you are the favorite of the Kosekin now, and there is nothing that they will not do for you."

"But we were separate before," said I, indignantly.

"That is true," said he, "in point of fact; but this ceremony makes your separation a legal thing, and gives it the solemn sanction of law and of religion. Among the Kosekin one cannot be considered as a separate man until the ceremony of separation has been publicly performed."

"I understood," said I, "that we were chosen to suffer the sacrifice together because we were lovers; and now, since you do not any longer regard us as lovers, why do you sacrifice us?"

At this question the Chief Pauper looked at me with one of those hungry glances of his, which showed how he thirsted for my blood, and he smiled the smile of an evil fiend.

"Why do we sacrifice you, Atam-or?" he replied. "Why, because we honor you both, and love you both so dearly that we are eager to give you the greatest of

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all blessings, and to deny you nothing that is in our power to bestow."

"Do you mean to sacrifice both of us?" I gasped.

"Of course."

"What! Almah too?"

"Certainly. Why should we be so cruel to the dear child as to deprive her of so great a boon?"

At this I groaned aloud and turned away in despair.

Many *joms* now passed away. I grew more and more melancholy and desperate. I thought sometimes of fighting my way out. My fire-arms were now my chief consolation; for I had fully made up my mind not to die quietly like a slaughtered calf, but to strike a blow for life, and meet my death amid slain enemies. In this prospect I found some satisfaction, and death was robbed of some of its terrors.

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CHAPTER XXX.

THE DAY OF SACRIFICE.

At last the time came.

It was the end of the dark season. Then, as the sun rises for its permanent course around the heavens, when the long day of six months begins, all in the land of the Kosekin is sorrow, and the last of the loved darkness is mourned over amid the most solemn ceremonies, and celebrated with the most imposing sacrifices. Then the most honored in all the land are publicly presented with the blessing of death and allowed to depart this hated life, and go to the realms of that eternal darkness which they love so well. It is the greatest of sacrifices, and is followed by the greatest of feasts. Thus the busy season—the loved season of darkness—ends, and the long, hateful season of light begins, when the Kosekin lurk in caverns and live in this way in the presence of what may be called artificial darkness.

It was for us—for me and for Almah—the day of doom. Since the ceremony of separation I had not seen her; but my heart had been always with her. I did not even know whether she was alive or not, but believed that she must be; for I thought that if she had died I should have heard of it, as the Kosekin would have rejoiced greatly over such an event. For every death is to them an occasion of joy, and the death of one so distinguished and so beloved as Almah would have given rise to nothing less than a national festival.

Of time I had but a poor reckoning; but, from the

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way in which the paupers kept account of their *joms,* I judged that about three months had elapsed since the ceremony of separation.

The paupers were now all joyous with a hideous joy. The Chief Pauper was more abhorrent than ever. He had the blood-thirst strong upon him. He was on that *jom* to perform his horrible office of *Sar Tabakin,* and as he accosted me he smiled the smile of a demon, and congratulated me on my coming escape from life. To this I had no word of answer to make; but my hands held my rifle and pistol, and these I clutched with a firmer grasp as my last hour approached.

The time for departure at length arrived. Soldiers of the Kosekin came, following the paupers, who went first, while the guards came after me. Thus we all emerged into the open air. There the broad terrace already mentioned spread out before my eyes, filled with thousands upon thousands of human beings. It seemed as though the entire population of the city was there, and so densely packed was this great crowd that it was only with great difficulty that a way was laid open for our passage.

Above was the sky, where the stars were twinkling faintly. There was no longer the light of the aurora australis; the constellations glimmered but dimly, the moon was shining with but a feeble ray; for there, far away over the icy crests of the lofty mountains, I saw a long line of splendid effulgence, all golden and red—the light of the new dawn—the dawn of that long day which was now approaching. The sight of that dawning light gave me new life. It was like a sight of home—the blessed dawn, the sunlight of a bright day, the glorious daybreak lost for so long a time, but now at last returning. I feasted my eyes on the spectacle, I burst into tears of joy, and I felt as though I could gaze at it

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forever. But the sun as it travelled was rapidly coming into view; soon the dazzling glory of its rim would appear above the mountain crest, and the season of darkness would end. There was no time to wait, and the guards hurried me on.

There in the midst of the square rose the pyramid. It was fully a hundred feet in height, with a broad flat top. At the base I saw a great crowd of paupers. Through these we passed, and as we did so a horrible death-chant arose. We now went up the steps and reached the top. It was about sixty feet square, and upon it there was a quadrangle of stones set about three feet apart, about sixty in number, while in the midst was a larger stone. All of these were evidently intended for sacrificial purposes.

Scarcely had I reached the top when I saw a procession ascend from the other side. First came some paupers, then some hags, and then followed by other hags I saw Almah. I was transfixed at the sight. A thrill passed through every nerve, and a wild impulse came to me to burst through the crowd, join her, and battle with them all for my life. But the crowd was too dense. I could only stand and look at her, and mark the paleness of her face and her mute despair. She saw me, waved her hand sadly, and gave me a mournful smile. There we stood separated by the crowd, with our eyes fastened on each other, and all our hearts filled with one deep, intense yearning to fly to one another's side.

And now there came up from below, louder and deeper, the awful death-chant. Time was pressing. The preparations were made. The Chief Pauper took his station by the central stone, and in his right hand he held a long, keen knife. Towards this stone I was led. The Chief Pauper then looked with his blear and blinking eyes to where the dawn was glowing over the moun-

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tain crest, and every moment increasing in brightness; and then, after a brief survey, he turned and whetted his knife on the sacrificial stone. After this he turned to me with his evil face, with the glare of a horrid death-hunger in his ravenous eyes, and pointed to the stone.

I stood without motion.

He repeated the gesture and said, "Lie down here!"

"I will not," said I.

"But it is on this stone," said he, "that you are to get the blessing of death."

"I'll die first!" said I fiercely, and I raised my rifle.

The Chief Pauper was puzzled at this. The others looked on quietly, thinking it probably a debate about some punctilio. Suddenly he seemed struck with an idea.

"Yes, yes," said he. "The woman first. It is better so."

Saying this, he walked towards Almah, and said something to the hags.

At this the chief of them—namely, the nightmare hag—led Almah to the nearest stone, and motioned to her to lie down. Almah prepared to obey, but paused a moment to throw at me one last glance and wave her hand as a last farewell. Then without a word she laid herself down upon the stone.

At this a thrill of fury rushed through all my being, rousing me from my stupor, impelling me to action, filling my brain with madness. The nightmare hag had already raised her long, keen knife in the air. Another moment and the blow would have fallen. But my rifle was at my shoulder; my aim was deadly. The report rang out like thunder. A wild, piercing yell followed, and when the smoke cleared away the nightmare hag lay dead at the foot of the altar. I was already

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there, having burst through the astonished crowd, and Almah was in my arms; and holding her thus for a moment I put myself in front of her and stood at bay, with my only thought that of defending her to the last and selling my life as dearly as possible.

The result was amazing.

After the report there was for some moments a deep silence, which was followed by a wild, abrupt cry from half a million people—the roar of indistinguishable words bursting forth from the lips of all that throng, whose accumulated volume arose in one vast thunder-clap of sound, pealing forth, echoing along the terraced streets, and rolling on far away in endless reverberations. It was like the roar of mighty cataracts, like the sound of many waters; and at the voice of that vast multitude I shrank back for a moment. As I did so I looked down and beheld a scene as appalling as the sound that had overawed me. In all that countless throng of human beings there was not one who was not in motion; and all were pressing forward towards the pyramid as to a common centre. On every side there was a multitudinous sea of upturned faces, extending as far as the eye could reach. All were in violent agitation, as though all were possessed by one common impulse which forced them towards me. At such a sight I thought of nothing else than that I was the object of their wrath, and that they were all with one common fury rushing towards me to wreak vengeance upon me and upon Almah for the slaughter of the nightmare hag.

All this was the work of but a few moments. And now as I stood there holding Almah—appalled, despairing, yet resolute and calm—I became aware of a more imminent danger. On the top of the pyramid, at the report of the rifle, all had fallen down flat on their

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faces, and it was over them that I had rushed to Almah's side. But these now began to rise, and the hags took up the corpse of the dead, and the paupers swarmed around with cries of "*Mut, mut!*" (dead, dead!), and exclamations of wonder. Then they all turned their foul and bleary eyes towards me, and stood as if transfixed with astonishment. At length there burst forth from the crowd one who sought to get at me. It was the Chief Pauper. He still held in his hand the long knife of sacrifice. He said not a word, but rushed straight at me, and as he came I saw murder in his look. I did not wait for him, but, raising my rifle, discharged the second barrel full in his face. He fell down, a shattered, blackened heap, dead.

As the second report thundered out it drowned all other sounds, and was again followed by an awful silence. I looked around. Those on the pyramid—paupers and hags—had again flung themselves on their faces. On the square below the whole multitude were on their knees, with their heads bowed down low. The silence was more oppressive than before; it was appalling—it was tremendous! It seemed like the dread silence that precedes the more awful outburst of the hurricane when the storm is gathering up all its strength to burst with accumulated fury upon its doomed victim.

But there was no time to be lost in staring, and that interval was occupied by me in hastily reloading my rifle. It was my last resource now; and if it availed not for defence it might at least serve to be used against ourselves. With this thought I handed the pistol to Almah, and hurriedly whispered to her that if I were killed she could use it against herself. She took it in silence, but I read in her face her invincible resolve.

The storm at last burst. The immense multitude rose to their feet, and with one common impulse came press-

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ing on from every side towards the pyramid, apparently filled with the one universal desire of reaching me—a desire which was now all the more intense and vehement from these interruptions which had taken place. Why they had fallen on their knees, why the paupers on the pyramid were still prostrate, I could not tell; but I saw now the swarming multitude, and I felt that they were rolling in on every side—merciless, bloodthirsty, implacable—to tear me to pieces. Yet time passed and they did not reach me, for an obstacle was interposed. The pyramid had smooth sides. The stairways that led up to the summit were narrow, and did not admit of more than two at a time; yet, had the Kosekin been like other people the summit of the pyramid would soon have been swarming with them, but as they were Kosekin none came up to the top; for at the base of the pyramid, at the bottom of the steps, I saw a strange and incredible struggle. It was not, as with us, who should go up first, but who should go up last; each tried to make his neighbor go before him. All were eager to go, but the Kosekin self-denial, self-sacrifice, and love for the good of others made each one intensely desirous to make others go up. This resulted in a furious struggle, in which as fast as any one would be pushed up the steps a little way he would jump down again and turn his efforts towards putting up others; and thus all the energies of the people were worn out in useless and unavailing efforts—in a struggle to which, from the very nature of the case, there could be no end.

Now those on the pyramid began to rise, and soon all were on their feet. Cries burst forth from them. All were looking at us, but with nothing like hostility; it was rather like reverence and adoration, and these feelings were expressed unmistakably in their cries, among which I could plainly distinguish such words as these:

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"*Ap Ram!*" "*Mosel anan wacosek!*" "*Sopet Mut!*"—The Father of Thunder! Ruler of Cloud and Darkness! Judge of Death! These cries passed to those below. The struggle ceased. All stood and joined in the cry, which was taken up by those nearest, and soon passed among all those myriads to be repeated with thunder echoes far and wide.

At this it suddenly became plain to me that the danger of death had passed away; that these people no longer regarded me as a victim, but rather as some mighty being—some superior, perhaps supernatural power, who was to be almost worshipped. Hence these prostrations, these words, these cries, these looks. All these told me that the bitterness of death had passed away. At this discovery there was, for a moment, a feeling of aversion and horror within me at filling such a position; that I, a weak mortal, should dare to receive adoration like this, and I recoiled at the thought; yet this feeling soon passed, for life was at stake—not my own merely, but that of Almah; and I was ready now to go through anything if only I might save her; so, instead of shrinking from this new part, I eagerly seized upon it, and at once determined to take advantage of the popular superstition to the utmost.

Far away over the crests of the mountains I saw the golden edge of the sun's disk, and the light flowed therefrom in broad effulgence, throwing out long rays of glory in a luminous flood over all the land. I pointed to the glorious orb, and cried to the paupers and to all who were nearest, in a loud voice:

"I am Atam-or, the Man of Light. I come from the land of light. I am the Father of Thunder, of Cloud and Darkness—the Judge of Death!"

At this the paupers all fell prostrate, and cried out to me to give them the blessing of death.

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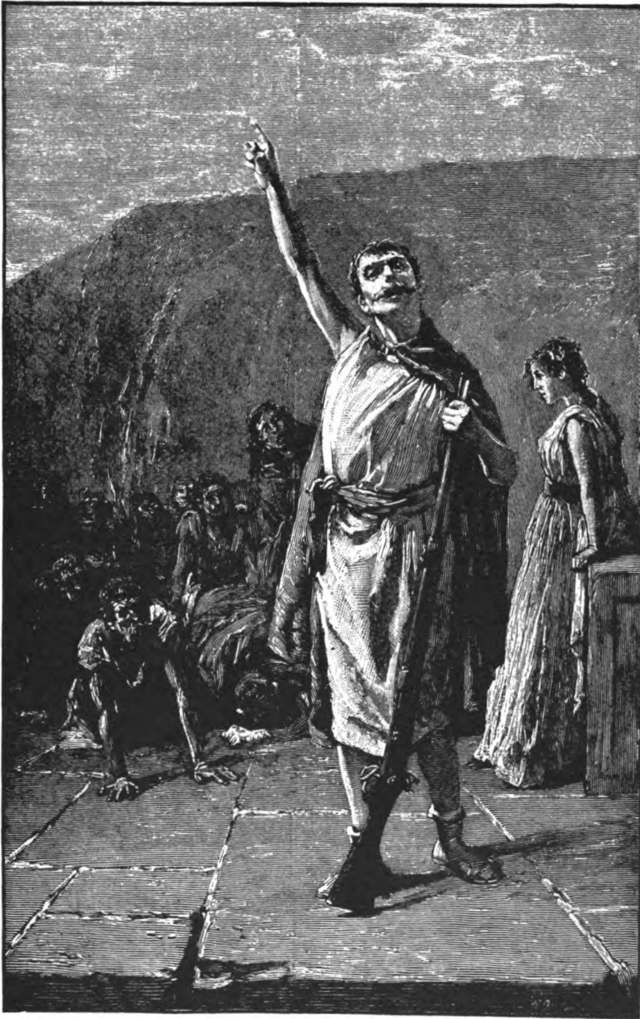

"I AM ATAM-OR, THE MAN OF LIGHT."

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I made no answer, but leading Almah to the edge of the pyramid told her to fire the pistol. A million eyes were fixed on us. She held up the pistol and fired. Immediately after I fired both barrels of the rifle; and as the reports rang out and the smoke cleared away, I heard a mighty murmur, and once more beheld all prostrate. Upon this I hurriedly loaded again, and waited for further revelations. All the time I could not help wondering at the effect produced by the rifle now in comparison with the indifference with which it had been regarded at my first arrival in the country. I could not account for it, but supposed that the excitement of a great religious festival and the sudden death of the Chief Pauper and the Chief Hag had probably deeply impressed them. In the midst of these thoughts the whole multitude arose; and once more there came to my ears the universal uproar of innumerable cries, in the midst of which I could hear the words, "*Ap Ram!*" "*Mosel anan wacosek!*" "*Sopet Mut!*"

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CHAPTER XXXI.

CONCLUSION.

In the midst of this the paupers and the hags talked earnestly together. Some of those who had been nearest in rank to the late Chief Pauper and Chief Hag were conspicuous in the debate. All looked at me and at Almah, and pointed towards the sun, which was wheeling along behind the distant mountain crest, showing a golden disk. Then they pointed to the dead bodies; and the hags took the Chief Hag, and the paupers the Chief Pauper, and laid them side by side on the central altar. After this a hag and a pauper advanced towards us, each carrying the sacrificial knife which had belonged to the deceased.

The hag spoke first, addressing Almah, in accordance with the Kosekin custom, which requires women to take the precedence in many things.

"Take this," she said, "oh, Almah, consort of Atam-or, and Co-ruler of Clouds and Darkness. Henceforth you shall be Judge of Death to the women of the Kosekin."

She then handed Almah the sacrificial knife of the Chief Hag, which Almah took in silence.

Then the pauper presented me with the sacrificial knife of the Chief Pauper, with the following words:

"Take this, oh, Atam-or, Father of Thunder and Ruler of Clouds and Darkness. Henceforth you shall be Judge of Death to the men of the Kosekin and *Sar Tabakin* over the whole nation."

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I received the knife in silence, for I had nothing to say; but now Almah spoke, as was fitting for her to do, since with the Kosekin the women must take the precedence; and here it was expected that she should reply in behalf of both of us.

So Almah, holding the sacrificial knife, stood looking at them, full of dignity, and spoke as follows:

"We will take this, oh, Kosekin, and we will reward you all. We will begin our reign over the Kosekin with memorable acts of mercy. These two great victims shall be enough for the *Mista Kosek* of this season. The victims designed for this sacrifice shall have to deny themselves the blessing of death, yet they shall be rewarded in other ways; and all the land from the highest to the lowest shall have reason to rejoice in our rule.

"To all you hags and paupers we grant the splendid and unparalleled boon of exile to Magones. There you can have all the suffering which heart can wish, and inevitable death. To all classes and ranks in the whole nation we promise to grant a diminution in their wealth by one quarter. In the abundance of our mercy we are willing ourselves to bear the burden of all the offerings that may be necessary in order to accomplish this. All in the land may at once give up one quarter of their whole wealth to us."

At this the hags and paupers gave a horrible yell of applause.

"As rulers of Light and Darkness, we will henceforth govern the nation in the light as well as in the dark. We will sacrifice ourselves so far to the public good as to live in the light, and in open palaces. We will consent to undergo the pains of light and splendor—to endure all the evils of luxury, magnificence, and boundless wealth for the good of the Kosekin nation. We will consent to forego the right of separation, and agree to

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live together, even though we love one another. Above all, we will refuse death and consent to live. Can any rulers do more than this for the good of their people?"

Another outburst of applause followed.

"In three *joms*," continued Almah, "all you hags and paupers shall be sent to exile and death on Magones. As for the rest of the Kosekin, hear our words. Tell them from us that the laborers shall all be elevated to the rank of paupers, the artisans shall be made laborers, the tradesmen artisans, the soldiers tradesmen, the Athons soldiers, the Kohens Athons, and the Meleks Kohens. There shall be no Meleks in all the land. We, in our love for the Kosekin, will henceforth be the only Meleks. Then all the misery of that low station will rest on us; and in our low estate as Meleks we shall govern this nation in love and self-denial. Tell them that we will forego the sacrifice and consent to live; that we will give up darkness and cavern gloom and live in light. Tell them to prepare for us the splendid palaces of the Meleks, for we will take the most sumptuous and magnificent of them all. Tell all the people to present their offerings. Tell them that we consent to have endless retinues of servants, soldiers, followers, and attendants. Tell them that with the advent of Almah and Atam-or a new era begins for the Kosekin, in which every man may be as poor as he likes, and riches shall be unknown in the land."

These extraordinary words seemed to fill the paupers with rapture. Exclamations of joy burst from them; they prostrated themselves in an irrepressible impulse of grateful admiration, as though such promises could only come from superior beings. Then most of them hurried down to communicate to the people below the glorious intelligence. Soon it spread from mouth to

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mouth, and all the people were filled with the wildest excitement.

For never before had such a thing been known, and never had such a self-sacrifice been imagined or thought possible, as that the rulers of the Kosekin could consent to be rich when they might be paupers; to live together when they might be separate; to dwell in the light when they might lurk in the deepest cavern gloom; to remain in life when they might have the blessing of death. Selfishness, fear of death, love of riches, and love of luxury, these were all unintelligible to the Kosekin, as much as to us would be self-abnegation, contempt of death, voluntary poverty, and asceticism. But as with us self-denying rulers may make others rich and be popular for this, so here among the Kosekin a selfish ruler might be popular by making others poor. Hence the words of Almah, as they were made known, gave rise to the wildest excitement and enthusiasm, and the vast multitude poured forth their feelings in long shouts of rapturous applause.

Amid this the bodies of the dead were carried down from the pyramid, and were taken to the *Mista Kosek* in a long and solemn procession, accompanied by the singing of wild and dismal chants.

And now the sun, rolling along behind the icy mountain crests, rose higher and higher every moment, and the bright light of a long day began to illumine the world. There sparkled the sea, rising far away like a watery wall, with the horizon high up in the sky; there rose the circle of giant mountains, sweeping away till they were blended with the horizon; there rose the terraces of the *amir*, all glowing in the sunlight, with all its countless houses and cavern-openings and arching trees and pointing pyramids. Above was the canopy of heaven, no longer studded with stars or glistening with

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the fitful shimmer of the aurora, but all radiant with the glorious sunlight, and disclosing all the splendors of the infinite blue. At that sight a thrill of joy passed through me. The long, long night at last was over; the darkness had passed away like some hideous dream; the day was here — the long day that was to know no shadow and no decline—when all this world should be illuminated by the ever-circling sun—a sun that would never set until his long course of many months be fully run. My heart swelled with rapture, my eyes filled with tears. "O Light!" I cried; "O gleaming, golden Sunlight! O Light of Heaven!—light that brings life and hope to man!" And I could have fallen on my knees and worshipped that rising sun.

But the light which was so glorious to us was painful and distressing to the Kosekin. On the top of the pyramid the paupers crouched, shading their eyes. The crowd below began to disperse in all directions, so as to betake themselves to their coverts and to the caverns, where they might live in the dark. Soon nearly all were gone except the paupers at the foot of the pyramid, who were awaiting our commands, and a crowd of Meleks and Athons at a distance. At a gesture from me the few paupers near us descended and joined those below.

Almah and I were alone on the top of the pyramid.

I caught her in my arms in a rapture of joy. This revulsion from the lowest despair—from darkness and from death back to hope and light and life—was almost too much to endure. We both wept, but our tears were those of happiness.

"You will be all my own now," said I, "and we can fly from this hateful land. We can be united—we can be married—here before we start, and you will not be cruel enough to refuse. You will consent, will you not, to be my wife before we fly from the Kosekin?"

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At this Almah's face became suffused with smiles and blushes. Her arms were about me, and she did not draw away, but looked up in sweet confusion and said,

"Why, as to that—I—I cannot be more your—your wife than I am."

"What do you mean ?" I exclaimed, in wonder. "My wife !"

Her eyes dropped again and she whispered,

"The ceremony of separation is with the Kosekin the most sacred form of marriage. It is the religious form; the other is merely the civil form."

This was unintelligible, nor did I try to understand it. It was enough to hear this from her own sweet lips; but it was a strange feeling, and I think I am the only man since Adam that was ever married without knowing it.

"As to flight," continued Almah, who had quite adopted the Kosekin fashion, which makes women take the lead—"as to flight, we need not hurry. We are all-powerful now, and there is no more danger. We must wait until we send embassies to my people, and when they are ready to receive us we will go. But now let us leave this, for our servants are waiting for us, and the light is distressing to them. Let us go to the nearest of our palaces and obtain rest and food."

Here Featherstone stopped, yawned, and laid down the manuscript.

"That's enough for to-day," said he; "I'm tired and can't read any more. It's time for supper."

THE END.

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